

KHETAUN (TOGETHER)

**With Key Steps to Inclusion
of Romani Children into Quality
Early Childhood Programs**

Ljubljana, 2017



PEDAGOŠKI INŠTITUT



Table of Contents

1 ABOUT THE PROJECT, PRESENTATION OF PROJECT PARTNERS, PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL PARTNERS • 5

1.1 About the project • 5

1.2 Presentation of project partners • 7

1.2.1 Latvia • 7

1.2.2 Slovenia • 7

1.2.3 Czech Republic • 8

1.2.4 Slovakia • 9

1.3 Presentation of national context • 10

1.3.1 Latvia • 10

1.3.2 Slovenia • 11

1.3.3 Czech Republic • 12

1.3.4 Slovakia • 14

1.4 Presentation of national partner • 15

1.4.1 Latvia • 15

1.4.2 Slovenia • 16

1.4.3 Czech Republic • 16

1.4.4 Slovakia • 17

2 HOLISTIC MODULE OF ENROLLING ROMANI CHILDREN IN ECEC PROGRAMS • 19

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF HOLISTIC MODULE • 23

3.1 Advocacy, informing and awareness-raising about the importance of preschool education and ensuring social justice in education and training (Latvia) • 23

3.2 Activities for children who are not enrolled in preschools and their parents (Slovenia) • 27

3.3 Empowering Romani families with regard to childcare and encouraging child development (Czech Republic) • 31

3.4 Building trust and connecting preschool with different actors within the local community (Slovakia) • 35

4 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE • 41

4.1 Latvia • 41

4.1.1 Introducing the Roma girl Ringla and the book “Damar’s Year” • 41

4.1.2 From play to book • 44

4.1.3 Creative Workshop "One, Two, Three! Those others will be free! Come play together!" • 47

4.1.4 All together! Celebration of International Roma day • 50

4.2 Slovenia • 53

4.2.1 Creation of multilingual picture book »With Friends to the Seaside = Prijatelni lenca pu mori« • 53

4.2.2 Puppet show: With friends to the Seaside • 56

4.2.3 Creative workshop and New Year's concert • 58

4.2.4 Visit to the ZOO • 61

4.3 Czech Republic • 63

4.3.1 We Say it Together – Tale of a Little Tongue • 63

4.3.2 We Say it Together – Learning Phones: focusing on the letter F and on breath exercises • 65

4.3.3 We Say it Together – My Day at Preschool • 67

4.3.4 We Say it Together – Learning Phones: focusing on letter S and Š, motor skills and vocabulary • 69

4.4 Slovakia • 71

4.4.1 Working with ECEC professionals, Romani parents and their children • 71

4.4.2 Social competences for children at an early age • 74

4.4.3 Children's picture books creation • 77

4.4.4 Free-time activities in cooperating preschool • 79

5 MATERIALS, ISSUED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INITIATIVE • 81

5.1 Latvia • 81

5.2 Slovenia • 83

5.3 Czech Republic • 86

5.4 Slovakia • 90

6 PROJECT IN NUMBERS • 92

7 EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PROJECT • 94

The process quality of the project activities • 96

The project outcomes • 110

Conclusion • 119

BIBLIOGRAPHY • 120

1

ABOUT THE PROJECT, PRESENTATION OF PROJECT PARTNERS, PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL PARTNERS

1.1 About the project

Petra Zgonec, Educational Research Institute

Khetaun (Together): With Key Steps to Inclusion of Romani Children into Quality Early Childhood Programs was an international project financed by the European Commission in the Erasmus+ programme (strategic partnership in the field of education). Four partners coming from Slovenia, Latvia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic participated in the project.

The project was carried out in the period from 2015 to 2017. The coordinator of the international consortium was Educational Research Institute, Centre for Quality in Education Step by Step (Slovenia), who cooperated with three international project partners:

- Centre for Education Initiatives, Latvia,
- Škola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o., Slovakia,
- Človek v tisni – People in need (PIN), the Czech Republic.

Partner organizations were selected on the basis of similar problems faced in their countries and their rich past experience in this area. These experiences are different one from another leading to the fact that the consortium represents an optimal set of complementary partner organizations.

Each of the project partners from the international consortium cooperated at their national levels with one or more preschools. Those national partners were:

- Preschool Šentvid, Slovenia,
- Preschool Pasacina, Latvia,
- Preschool Košice, Slovakia,
- Preschool clubs (PIN and Amalthea) and preschool Ústí nad Labem Pastelka, the Czech Republic.

The main aim of the project was to develop and implement a holistic module of enrolling Romani children and their parents in ECEC.

The publication *Khetaun (Together): With Key Steps to Inclusion of Romani Children into Quality Early Childhood* was published at the end of the project. Readers will receive a holistic insight in the project implementation through the following content:

- Presentation of project partners in the international consortium, presentation of national project partners and presentation of national contexts of enrolling Romani children in ECEC programmes;
- Development and implementation of a holistic module of enrolling Romani children in ECEC programmes;
- Justification of module's key areas of enrolling Romani children in ECEC programmes;
- Examples of good practice of performing activities for Romani children and their parents which contribute to successful enrolment of Romani children and their parents in ECEC programmes;
- Didactic and other materials for Romani children, parents, ECEC practitioners and policy makers published during the project;
- Results of the project's quantitative evaluation;
- Results of the project's qualitative evaluation.

Translation:

Mateja Mlinar, Educational Research Institute

1.2 Presentation of project partners

1.2.1 Latvia

Kristine Liepina, Centre for Education Initiatives

NGO Center for Education Initiatives (CEI) has been founded with the goal to promote changes in the community's perception about the role of education in creating human, righteous society and to promote the development of the further education in Latvia without reference to people's nationality, race, social status, religion and sex, as well as the physical and mental level of development.

CEI implements projects related to education, society integration and development of civic society, and are one of the leading organizations in Latvia working in the area of Roma inclusion. The CEI's strength is development and implementation of ECEC professionals in-service training programs to prepare them to work in multicultural and inclusive classrooms, as well as establishing of social partnership for Roma inclusion in local communities' level – among schools, parents, local authorities, social workers and Roma NGOs. Also, CEI implements advocacy activities for Roma inclusion through the active participation in the work on the development of the policy documents at national level.

1.2.2 Slovenia

Urša Novak, Educational Research Institute

The Educational Research Institute (ERI) is the central institution in Slovenia for research in education undertaking basic research, development and applied projects on issues of current interest in all sectors of education and related areas. ERI was established in 1965 by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, as an institute devoted to the study of education.

The ERI is organized in nine Centers. One of them, which was involved in the proposed project, is Center for Quality in Education Step by Step (CQE SBS). CQE SBS (before 2016 known as Developmental Research Center for Pedagogical Initiatives Step by Step) was

founded in 1995 as Step by step program at OSI National Foundation in Slovenia.

The CQE SBS was established in order to research, develop, initiate, implement and promote various activities in the educational field, which support educational reform processes in public pre-/schools in Slovenia. Through these activities Center aims to ensure equal opportunities in education for all children and involve families and community members into the educational processes. The Center's programs are based on principles of democratic civil society, children's and parent's rights, contemporary knowledge of child development and learning abilities and introduction of changes into the educational system.

1.2.3 Czech Republic

Kateřina Velíšková and Alena Felcmanová, Ālověk v tísni – People in Need

People in Need is a non-governmental non-profit organization based in the Czech Republic. Although it also focuses on humanitarian aid and development and human rights support, a significant part of its work is devoted to education and social work.

The educational programme Varianty provides informational and methodological support, educational courses, didactic materials in the field of inclusive education, intercultural education, education for global development and migration. It also promotes systemic changes in these areas, so that the overall education system becomes more inclusive and able to react to the challenges of the modern world.

The Social Integration Programmes seek to help people from socially deprived area through counselling and educational services. In more than 60 Bohemian, Moravian and Slovak municipalities, it provides support for local self-governments leading to social cohesion and municipal development. It does so through supporting disadvantaged children in preschool and afterschool clubs and assisting them through tutoring. Its field social workers

also focus on problems such as inadequate housing, long-term unemployment and indebtedness.

1.2.4 Slovakia

Miroslav Sklenka, Skola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o

Skola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o. is an open non-profit organization dedicated to community development and lifelong learning for socially disadvantaged groups, with an emphasis on families, especially with children at an early age, and with an ambition to compete on the international level. The organization cares about the needs of families from heterogeneous communities, especially those with children at an early age, contributes to the development of stimulating environment with emphasis on education, employment, housing and health and finally eliminates intolerance and facilitates dialogue among stakeholders.

The main program areas are:

- Children successful in school;
- Families which fulfil their basic functions;
- Sustainable heterogeneous communities;
- Engaged, educated and experienced experts.

1.3 Presentation of national context

1.3.1 Latvia

*Sandra Kraukle, Kristine Liepina and Daiga Zake,
Centre for Education Initiatiatives*

The Roma are one of the oldest ethnic minorities in Latvia, and have been an integral part of Latvia's cultural diversity since the 16th century. The Roma community in Latvia is relatively small. But, it is difficult to find accurate information on the number of Roma residing in Latvia as statistical data provided by different sources varies significantly. According to the Central Statistical Bureau's data, 5297 Roma resided in Latvia in 2016, while the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) Population Register gives information about 7042 Roma which constitutes 0,33% of the total Latvian population – 2 129 320 inhabitants in 01.01.2017. However, the Roma leaders and representatives of the Roma civil society consider that the Roma population in Latvia might be considerably larger – from 10 000 even up to 15 000 (Latvian Facts, 2015), which is based on the fact that great part of Roma choose not to indicate their ethnicity in the personal identification documents.

Over the last century Latvia's Roma have mainly lived a settled way of life and are not characterised by extensive travel and wide-spread migration (Latvia RAXEN National Focal Point, 2013). Based on the data that is available the majority of Roma live in the large towns. In Latvia there is no so-called ghettoization of the Roma community or segregation at the regional or local level; the Roma have formed a territorially heterogeneous group that communicates actively with the local community (Ministry of Culture, Information on Roma Integration policy measures in Latvia, 2012).

Latvia's Roma is not an ethnically homogenous community. Two different groups of Roma have lived in Latvia since ancient times: the Latvian Roma (Loftitke Roma) and the Russian Roma (Xaladytka Roma), whose differences manifest themselves territorially, linguistically, culturally and in their traditional way of life (Ministry of Culture, Information on Roma Integration policy measures in Latvia, 2012).

Pre-school education in Latvia is available from the age of 1.5 years, but children may enter from 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 years of age. It is mandatory to participate in pre-primary education programmes for five and six year old children who do not attend pre-school education institutions. Pre-school education is considered a comprehensive first stage of general education and all children have to complete it by the time they are 7 years old.

Provision of municipal preschool educational institutions is the responsibility of the municipalities. Education is free of charge, but parents have to make a financial contribution to cover the cost of meals.

Proportion of children involved in formal pre-school education in Latvia at age 3 to 7 is around 87%. There are no available accurate data about the total number of Roma children in pre-school educational establishments, but according to the research ("Roma in Latvia", Latvian Facts, 2015), around 70% of the Roma children of 3 to 7 years of age attend pre-school. The research also shows that 81,5% of the Roma find it important that their children and grandchildren go to kindergarten, but they are not always taking them there. As main reasons of Roma children not attending pre-school is mentioned that Roma parents do not consider it important to send a child to kindergarten as they spend the day together doing household chores and looking after their children themselves (50%), the long waiting lists (6,2%), and, also language barrier (4,6%), because everyday communication for 87,5% of Roma families is in their own language, and only 6,7% communicate in Latvian and 5,8% - in Russian.

1.3.2 Slovenia

Urša Novak, Educational Research Institute

Pre-school education is aimed at children aged one to six or the starting age of compulsory primary education and it is not compulsory. It is up to parents to decide whether to enrol their child or not. Pre-school education is provided by public and private kindergartens. Where necessary, a network of public kindergartens

is complemented by private kindergartens that hold a concession. Public kindergartens are founded by local communities in line with the needs of the local population. Kindergartens may implement as to the needs of parents and children and in agreement with the municipality various programmes: full-day, half-day and part-time programmes. The programmes are carried out by pre-school teachers and pre-school teacher assistants.

Public kindergartens welcome children aged 11 months or more. Children remain and receive pre-school education and care in the same institution until they start basic school. Kindergartens provide Education and care in two age groups:

- first age group: children aged 1 to 3 years and
- second age group: children aged 3 years to basic school age (<http://www.eurydice.si/images/publikacije/The-Education-System-in-the-Republic-of-Slovenia-2016-17.pdf>)

1.3.3 Czech Republic

Kateřina Velíšková and Adéla Lábusová, Člověk v tísní – People in Need

Roma constitute the most numerous national minority in the Czech Republic, but estimates of its size vary significantly. According to the European Roma Rights Centre, the size of the population is between 150,000 and 350,000” (RECI, 2015, p. 19). This could be translated into 1.4% to 3.3% of the overall population. Significantly, a half of the Roma population is considered as or is at risk of becoming socially excluded (Report on the Situation of Roma Communities in the Czech Republic 2015, p. 5). Moreover, a staggering 87% of the people living in socially excluded localities are Roma (RECI, 2015, p. 33). The biggest number of Romani people live in the regions Ústí nad Labem and the Moravian-Silesian region.

In the educational sector, the level of inequality remains relatively high. However, it is difficult to estimate the numbers of Roma children participating in pre-school education. As the Special Report on Roma Inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care states: “There is no systematic monitoring of the participation

rates of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in preschools in the Czech Republic. A study of the educational progress of Czech Roma children states that approximately 48 percent of Roma children participate in some form of one-year pre-primary preparatory education,(...) compared to 90 percent of the majority population; this proportion has not changed much over the last decade” (RECI, 2015, p. 10).

A major shift came with a new amendment to the School Law, under which a child is obliged to undergo one year of pre-school education before entering school (ČOSIV). This measure was passed with the hope of diminishing some of the differences in preparedness for school education among children from various social-economic backgrounds, especially from socially disadvantaged areas. However, it came into practice only in September 2017, so it is early to evaluate its results.

Also, the Amendment introduced a different approach to support. A child can now be assigned with specific support measures without determining one of the categories of support (social disadvantage, medical disadvantage, disability). This principle of support moves away from a medical approach stressing a specific diagnosis towards an approach called “Dynamic Diagnosis”, which emphasizes the search for specific steps based on momentary situation and level of development rather than standardized testing. We are now at the stage of a two-year transition period, which is turning out to be rather demanding. The wider academic community is pointing out that there was a lack of preparation for the measure and there is fear concerning the functionality of the system. On top of that, both teachers and educational advisors lack materials for identification and for working with socially disadvantaged children. All in all, there is now a wider range of support measures available to the socially disadvantaged children, but the way in which their needs will be diagnosed and processed remains unclear.

1.3.4 Slovakia

Denisa Sklenkova, Skola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o.

The Roma represent the second largest ethnic minority in Slovakia, though some believe they are the largest (Šuvada, 2015). In the last census, 2011, only 105,738 Roma identified as members of the Roma minority; a figure that represents about 2 percent of the overall citizenry. The census, however, is based on voluntary self-ascription. Most Roma, possibly through ignorance or fear of subsequent discrimination, do not voluntarily self-ascribe their Roma ethnicity; most opt for an alternative nationality category, usually Slovak or Hungarian (Vaňo, 2001). When “attributed ethnicity” is applied, the structure of the Slovak population looks quite different. Statistical estimates and sociological mappings vary. Some claim there are about 500,000 Roma living in Slovakia (Šuvada, 2015). The Atlas of Roma Communities 2013 gives a qualified estimate of about 403,000 Roma living in Slovakia, which represents around 7.4 percent of the total population. The Council of Europe estimates that Roma in Slovakia comprise 9.17 percent of the total population. Despite the inconsistent estimates, it is indisputable that Slovakia is now one of the European countries with the highest absolute number of Roma, as well as the highest relative share of the total population (Jurova, 2004, p. 248).

According to Šprocha (2014, p. 147) the number of Roma children under the age of 15 was estimated at about 151,000 in 2012, and this age group was projected to grow to more than 165,000 Roma children in Slovakia by 2030. When combined with expectations of the significant decline of the overall child population by 2030, the proportion of Roma children in kindergartens and schools can be expected to continue increasing. While Roma children accounted for less than 7 percent in 1980, and slightly more than 18 percent in 2012, these projections suggest that Roma children could account for more than 21 percent by 2030 (Šprocha, 2014, 148). Preventing the transmission of generational disadvantage for today’s Roma children is a crucial investment in Slovakia’s future, with long-term benefits for those Roma children, their families and communities, and the economy and society as a whole.

1.4 Presentation of national partner

1.4.1 Latvia

Kristine Liepina, Centre for Education Initiatives

The national partner in the implementation of the project in Latvia is **pre-school “Pasacina” (Fairy tale) at Preili Municipality**. Preili Municipality is located in the southeast of Latvia – Latgale region, 200 km from capital of Latvia – Riga. The municipality unites Preili town and Preili, Aizkalne, Sauna and Pelēči rural municipalities.

In the year 2016 Preili Municipality had 10392 inhabitants and 114 of them are Roma what makes up to 1,1%. Roma population mostly lives in Preili town, just few families live in rural area, and, there is no separate Roma settlement in Preili municipality. The both groups – the Latvian Roma (Loftitke Roma) and the Russian Roma (Xaladytka Roma) are represented in Preili Municipality.

The pre-school “Pasacina” is the only pre-school in the municipality and it implements general pre-school education program and general pre-school education program for minorities for children from 1,5 till 7 years of age. In school year 2016/2017 “Pasacina” had 346 children attending and 11 from them were Roma, but at the beginning of the school year 2017/2018 it has 363 children including 14 Roma children.

The pre-school “Pasacina” was chosen as national partner for several reasons. Only in some towns the ratio of Roma exceeds 1% of the total population as it is in Preili Municipality, but it is located far from the big cities where the support to the Roma community is further enhanced. Also, as “Pasacina” is the only pre-school in municipality, work with ECEC professionals of this institution influences all children of preschool age at concrete municipality. And, the municipality and pre-school were very supportive and interested to increase quality of inclusion of Romani children in educational process and in pre-school education in particular, and enlarge involvement of Roma families in education and society.

1.4.2 Slovenia

Urša Novak, Educational Research Institute

Preschool Šentvid, located in Ljubljana, operates in 41 departments within four units. In the school year 2015/16 738 children were enrolled in the pre-school education program, 7 of which were Roma (one child was only enrolled, three attended preschool periodically, and three regularly visiting preschool). In the school year 2017/18 745 children were included in the preschool, 9 of which were Roma. Seven children are in the deployment phase; one child is included in the program from time to time, and the other one is on a regular basis.

We decided to invite Šentvid Kindergarten to participate, because most Roma initiatives are linked to Roma living in Prekmurje, Dolenjska or in Bela krajina, while there are no Roma-related initiatives for those who live in other parts of Slovenia.

The Roma family Strojjan, located in Šentvid preschool area live in Romani settlement. They live in the house, shacks and caravans. Only those living in the house have electricity, water and sewerage connections. Barracks and trailers are poorly isolated.

Roje residents are confronted with non-existent public transport links (urban passenger transport) and unregulated pedestrian areas, which makes access to preschool, school and other institutions very difficult. A school bus service is organized for school-age children.

1.4.3 Czech Republic

Adéla Lábusová and Kateřina Velíšková, Člověk v tísní – People in Need

In order to test and monitor the materials and the module created in the project, we decided to work primarily with **People in Need preschool clubs**, which are situated in nine towns and socially excluded locations. In addition to that, partner state **preschool in Ústí nad Labem Pastelka and Preschool club Almathea Chrudim** a took part in the monitoring as well. All ECEC professional were informed about the project development and the tested material

created in the project. On top of that, special monitoring sessions were held in Prague, Kladno, Liberec and Ústí nad Labem.

These partners were chosen due to the fact, that People in Need already works in many socially excluded locations and preschool clubs are just one of the services it provides. It is therefore natural to take advantage of this fact and use these clubs to monitor and test the project outputs. We have tested the activities in both preschool clubs and a state school in order to get a more accurate picture. The town of Ústí nad Labem also has the highest number of socially excluded people in its municipal area (Čada, p. 34). All in all, up to 200 Romani families live in socially excluded areas in places where the preschool clubs operate, mostly living in lodging houses and room rentals. The only exception is Prague, where people live in flats of different quality. However, it is difficult to estimate the percentage of Romani children, who do not attend preschools in these areas, because this data is not collected with regards to ethnicity. In the Czech Republic as a whole, approximately 10% of five year olds did not attend any form of preschool education, as was stated by the proposed amendment to the School Law (Government proposal: Amendment to the laws n. 561/2004 and n. 200/1990, 2015, p. 19).

1.4.4 Slovakia

Denisa Sklenkova, Skola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o.

The national partner of Skola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o. has been the **Preschool, Hrebendova street Nr. 5, Kosice, Slovak Republic**. That is a preschool placed in a block of flats called Lunik IX. in Kosice city. Since their establishment in January 1997, they have had only 30 Roma children enrolled in two morning classes. Currently, they have got 9 all-day-long classes of 111 children altogether. The preschool is for children aged 3-7. Their founder is Košice city (self-government). The preschool has three pavilions connected by a corridor. Classes, dormitories and changing and bathing rooms, including stock rooms, dining rooms, kitchen and laundry are placed on the ground floor and upstairs. This is a pure Roma neighbourhood. According to the law on education

no. 245/2008, the preschool supports individual socio-emotional, intellectual, physical, ethical, and esthetical child development; it further develops child abilities and skills, and created conditions for further education. They help to prepare children for the life in society in accordance to individual and age characteristics of children.

The government does not appear to understand the acute problems facing Lunik IX as it does not engage with the area, treating it as a problem environment, and does not see any potential in terms of investments. The authorities in the city of Košice do not demonstrate any desire to improve the conditions of Roma who live there. It should be said that many Roma living in Lunik IX do not show much interest in addressing the dire conditions there and appear somewhat resigned to their fate: there are no community organizations, for instance.

The only ray of hope in Lunik IX is the preschool, which sits like an island in the middle of the ghetto; all 111 children who attend the school are Roma, and around fifty parents also work at the school as support and auxiliary workers, receiving social benefits from the state for this work. The maximum capacity of this preschool is 111 children. The number of children enrolled in this preschool has been the same at the beginning and also at the end of the project. But as a result of our project, the interest from the side of Roma parents has increased and there will be a reconstruction and enlargement of premises. This is very important as the preschool is the only one operating in this municipality. Ms Anna Klepacova has been head of the preschool for twenty years and believes that parents are more involved now because they see the benefits of education in terms of accessing employment in the future. For her, education is emancipatory and the only viable option for improving the lives of Roma; the state needs to support such initiatives and contribute to the improvement of Roma lives. At present, Lunik IX is a ghetto that constricts the capacity of its residents, offers no hope or opportunity, and actively stigmatizes those who reside there. That's why we have decided to contribute to a better quality of life of those who are living there, especially those most vulnerable ones – children at an early age.

2

HOLISTIC MODULE OF ENROLLING ROMANI CHILDREN IN ECEC PROGRAMS

Petra Zgonec, Educational Research Institute

The project was based on various research outcomes which indicate that quality ECEC programs which also include parents can significantly contribute to development of potentials and quality life of children from vulnerable groups not only in early childhood but also later in life. Furthermore, it leads to development of the society as a whole (Van der Gaag, 2002; Heckman in James, 2006).

With the aim of ensuring accessible and quality ECEC programs for Romani children and their parents, a holistic module of enrolling Romani children in ECEC programs was developed and implemented. The module covers the following working areas at the level of preschool:

- Importance of knowledge and enrolling Romani children in ECEC programs and ensuring social justice in education and care;
- Performing activities for Romani children who are not enrolled in preschool and their parents;
- Raising awareness of Romani parents on importance of enrolling Romani children in preschool and empowerment of Romani parents in educating and encouraging their children's development;
- Connecting preschool with key stakeholders from the local community.

The holistic module of enrolling Romani children in ECEC programs predicts direct work with four target groups:

1. ECEC practitioners
2. Children
3. Parents
4. Key stakeholders in the local community.

Holistic and simultaneous actions along with preschool endeavours in all of the above mentioned areas and target groups contribute significantly to successful enrolment of Romani children and their parents in ECEC programs.

In order to reach this aim, the following implementation of the project was planned:

1. YEAR OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

1. Phase: Developing 4 modules and performing 4 international trainings of trainers based on these modules.

Each of the international project partners was responsible for developing a module and performing an international training based on it for one of the below mentioned topics:

- Importance of knowledge and enrolling Romani children in ECEC programs and ensuring social justice in education and care (Latvia);
- Performing activities for Romani children who are not enrolled in preschool and their parents (Slovenia);
- Raising awareness of Romani parents on importance of enrolling Roma children in preschool and empowerment of Romani parents in educating and encouraging their children's development (Czech Republic);
- Connecting preschool with key stakeholders from the local community (Slovakia).

2. Phase: Developing 4 modules and performing 4 national trainings based on these modules for ECEC practitioners in each country.

Each project partner from the international consortium was responsible for developing modules based on international modules with needed modifications to their national context. After that they performed trainings for ECEC practitioners at national levels on each of the below mentioned topics:

- Importance of knowledge and enrolling Romani children in ECEC programs and ensuring social justice in education and care (Latvia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia);
- Performing activities for Romani children who are not enrolled in preschool and their parents (Latvia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia);
- Raising awareness of Romani parents on importance of enrolling Romani children in preschool and empowerment of Romani parents in educating and encouraging their children's development (Latvia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia);
- Connecting preschool with key stakeholders from the local community (Latvia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia).

2. YEAR OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

3. Phase: Implementation of training content in practice at the level of preschool in each country.

The next step after international trainings of trainers and trainings of ECEC practitioners at the national levels was the implementation of the training content in practice. Numerous activities were conducted by each international partner, each nation partner or in cooperation of both. Following are some of these activities:

- Raising awareness of ECEC practitioners and general public on the importance of knowledge and enrolling Romani children in ECEC programs (presentations of project activities, outcomes etc. to whole preschool staff and parent council in preschool, to general public at round tables in local communities, etc.);
- Performing activities for Romani children who are not enrolled

in preschool and raising awareness of Romani parents on importance of enrolling Roma children in preschool and empowerment of Romani parents in educating and encouraging their children's development (performing creative workshops and other meetings for children and/or parents in preschool, in Romani communities and in wider environments, etc.);

- Connecting preschool with various representatives from the local community (identification of key actors in the local environment who work with Roma families and can help preschool to achieve greater success in enrolling Roma children to ECEC programs, establishment of local action teams with key stakeholders from the local community who regularly meet in order to reach integrated approach of enrolling Romani families and their children in ECEC programs, etc.).
- Development and publication of materials for Romani children and their parents (children picture book, family board game, etc.) and materials concerning enrolment of Romani children and their parents in ECEC programs intended for ECEC practitioners, local community representatives and policy makers (national guidelines, EU guidelines, etc.).

Translation:

Mateja Mlinar, Educational Research Institute

3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF HOLISTIC MODULE

3.1. Advocacy, informing and awareness-raising about the importance of preschool education and ensuring social justice in education and training (Latvia)

*Sandra Kraukle, Kristine Liepina and Daiga Zake,
Centre for Education Initiatives*

The main children's rights' document – the UN Convention of the Children Rights states that every child has a right to education, and, the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (The UN Convention of the Children Rights, 1989).

The disadvantaged position of Roma in European societies cannot be overcome unless equality of opportunity and access to quality education is guaranteed for Roma children. And, pre-school education is extremely important as an effective means to establish the basis for further learning, preventing school drop-out, increasing equity of outcomes and overall skill levels.

For both – individual children and their families, longitudinal studies demonstrate that participation in high-quality ECEC programmes has a long-lasting impact on educational outcomes and attainment, as well as on their overall social, emotional, and physical development; in short, their well-being. These benefits are

even stronger for vulnerable or marginalized children (Lazarri & Vanderbroeck, 2013).

Unfortunately in Europe, a significant number of young children from vulnerable groups still do not have access to formal high quality and inclusive ECEC programs. According to an UNICEF study, the most vulnerable children often access ECEC services at lower rates than their peers, and when they are enrolled, they are placed in lower-quality services (UNICEF, 2008).

The Communication from the European Commission on the ECEC from 2011 states, that “Although their needs for support are greater, participation rates of Roma children in ECEC are generally significantly lower than for the native population, and expanding these opportunities is a key policy challenge across the EU.” (European Commission, 2011).

And, it is confirmed by quotation from Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe, which states that attendance of preschool education for Roma children should be encouraged, under equal conditions as for other children, and enrolment in preschool education should be promoted if necessary by providing specific support measures.

Research evidence suggests that children experiencing a range of disadvantage (socio-economic, but also exclusion or disability) benefit disproportionately and to a higher degree from early childhood care and education. However, it is also clear that all children, even the most advantaged, benefit. And, positive effects ECEC programs are more substantial and long lasting when programs start earlier, have an integrated and holistic approach to child development, and include support for parents, and parental and community involvement (Park and Vandekerchove, 2016), as education is closely associated with social enrichment and inclusion, the upgrading of human capital, increased opportunities, and enhanced freedom and welfare (Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, 2015).

The intercultural learning and combating discrimination should be explicitly recognized as priorities of the ECEC programs and should be a key element of inclusive ethos of educational institutions.

The segregation of families with different cultural and economic backgrounds in a society can have a detrimental effect on young children and their families, in terms of their rights, development and future. ECEC programs have to provide an equal-rights meeting ground for families from diverse backgrounds to meet, connect and find the support they need. Access to desegregated education and care services is an important tool for promoting social justice and encouraging healthy development of individuals and societies.

For ensuring social justice and creating inclusive ECEC services recommendations listed by J. Laar have to be followed:

1. Better inform parents on the benefits of preschool for children's later-life outcomes;
2. Promote inclusive preschools by reaching out to parents and by involving them more directly in pre-school with the help of Roma teaching assistants;
3. Remove cost barriers possibly coupled with regular attendance subsidies.
4. Support parenting at home (Laar, J.de, 2012).

Also, ECEC practitioners, and particularly those working in preschools in ethnically mixed communities, have to receive specialized training on social justice and anti-bias education, with a special regard to Roma.

The core principle of anti-bias education is the belief that all children and families can be successful and contributing members of society regardless of their background and socio-economic status. Education for Social Justice is an active/activist approach to challenging prejudices and stereotypes. It is not sufficient to say one is not prejudiced and to stand by as an observer. It is necessary for

each individual to actively intervene, challenge, and counter the personal and institutional behaviours that perpetuate oppression (ISSA, 2005).

The promotion of social justice is also linked to the concepts of equality and equity. Equality in practice means that all children and their families receive the same support and access to services. Equity recognizes the needs of individuals and promotes provision of support to those who need it most. ECEC services can benefit from recognizing the equity in community members, by embracing the interests, skills and needs of community (ICDI, 2017).

3.2 Activities for children who are not enrolled in preschools and their parents (Slovenia)

Petra Zgonec, Educational Research Institute

Roma form the largest and most vulnerable ethnic minority in Europe. In the whole of Europe live of an estimated 10-12 million Roma (Bernát and Rahman, 2014) and they are in a greater extent exposed to a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion in comparison to other Europeans (EU and Roma). According to the official data from Unesco and the European Council (2007), there are still around 50 % of Roma children who do not finish their compulsory education (Vonta, 2013 in Vonta et al., 2013), which is considered the fundamental act of escaping the poverty (Vonta, 2011).

In relation to the education structure for Slovenia in 1991 and 2002, based on the document with general information about the Roma ethnic community in the Republic of Slovenia (Splošne informacije o romski etnični skupnosti v Republiki Sloveniji, 2006), there are more than 65 % of the Roma population without finished compulsory education. Furthermore, the percentage of successful Roma children in school is significantly lower from others (Vonta, 2013 in Vonta et al., 2013). Similar results were found years later in another national evaluation study on achievements of the Roma children in primary school (Nacionalne evalvacijske študije o uspešnosti romskih učencev v osnovni šoli; Vonta et al., 2011). In school years from 2005/2006 and 2008/2009, there were only 60 % of Roma children participating in the research, who successfully finished their primary education (ibid.).

According to different researches, enrolling Roma children in quality ECEC programs is one of the key factors for reaching success in education and in social inclusion (Vonta, 2013 in Vonta et al., 2013). The results of the above mentioned Slovenian national evaluation study also showed the enrolment of the Roma children in kindergartens to be one of the key indicators of their good performance in primary schools. Despite these results and in com-

parison with the other children, there is still the majority of Roma children who are not involved in ECEC programs (The situation of Roma..., 2012).

Slovenia is also one of the countries, which is confronted with a high level of Roma children who are not enrolled in ECEC programs. There are no official collected data concerning the number of the enrolled Roma children, yet the results of the already mentioned evaluation study (Vonta et al., 2011) show that approximately half of the Roma first graders in school year 2009/2010 attended ECEC programs before going to primary school. Regarding the fact that almost a third of the principals did not have any evidence of the enrolled Roma children, one can assume on the experience from the field the number being even more alarming.

It should be emphasized that in Europe children from minority groups and families with lower income have greater problems accessing ECEC programs (Vandenbroeck and Lazzari, 2013 in Jager 2015). As a result, one can confirm that not all children have equal rights to be included in ECEC programs. It is then crucial for kindergartens to strive to provide ECEC programs also (to) children of ethnical minorities and families with lower income in order to assure equality in the ECEC process (Vonta, 2013 in Vonta et al.).

Such endeavours in ensuring access to ECEC programs meet the right of all children to be enrolled in ECEC programs and development of their potentials, which are defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). European countries as the signers of this document are in this way obliged to respect the Convention (Vonta, 2010). Such efforts are also established while ensuring quality ECEC programs (Tankersley et al., 2013), as there is no quality without equality in the ECEC processes (Vonta, 2013 in Vonta et al., 2013).

The situation in practice is quite different to the given facts and expectations about ensuring greater access of ECEC programs to children from underprivileged environments. Jager (2015) quotes

the results of the research made in Slovenia, where the relationships of principals and ECEC practitioners towards performing ECEC programs for underprivileged children were analysed. The results show that kindergartens do not question themselves about the children who are not enrolled. What is even more concerning is the fact that they are aware that those children (also) come from underprivileged environments (ibid).

The first step toward building trust between marginalized groups and kindergartens/ECEC practitioners are outreach activities (Jager, 2016). They refer to mobile services of the institution with which they get in touch with the target group, who does not normally use them (Buck, 2009 in Buck et al., 2009). According to several international documents, researches and others sources, trust of the Roma parents toward the institution and the ECEC practitioners is one of the most significant requirements to enrol their child in the institution (i.e. Quality in early childhood Education and care, 2013; Save the Children, 2001, Building Futures: Developing trust, 2009 et al.).

In Slovenia, for example, two relevant documents (annex to the kindergarten curriculum: *Dodatek h Kurikulu za vrtce za delo z otroki Romov*, 2005 and the *Strategy of the Education of the Roma population in the Republic of Slovenia*, 2004) stress the meaning of building trust between Roma parents and kindergarten. The latter emphasizes the meaning of performing activities on the kindergarten level even before enrolling the child in the kindergarten in order to build trust between the Roma parents and the kindergarten. Home visits of the ECEC practitioners and connecting with parents is then of great importance (ibid).

The Strategy (ibid) also suggests performing activities for children and parents which offer gradual learning about the institution, its people, other children and parents in order to ensure a soft transition from home to kindergarten. It is also important to think about giving more attention to all transitions from different learning environments (i. e. from family to kindergarten, from kindergarten to school, etc.) (Režek, 2013 in Vonta et al. 2013). Transition

is considered to bring positive expectations and at the same time anxiety and stress, resulting in numerous problems. As lower are the differences between the old and the new environments, the easier is the transition. With Roma children, their environment is mainly quite distinct from the institutional environment into which they are coming. This is the reason why their transition is even more difficult and the accompanying concerns even greater from others (ibid).

In the environments with the Roma population, it is significant to include Roma representatives in the kindergarten with the purpose of ensuring softer transitions of Roma children from their homes to kindergarten (Vonta et al., 2010 in Jager, 2015). It is of special relevance to encourage employment of professionals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds not only for Roma children, but also for those coming from other underprivileged environments (Vandenbroeck and Lazzari, 2014, ibid). Kindergartens which employ migrant ECEC practitioners are namely more successful in encouraging families from different (and underprivileged) environments to join the institution (de Graaff and van Keulen, 2008 ibid).

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3.3 Empowering Romani families with regard to childcare and encouraging child development (Czech Republic)

Adéla Lábusová and Kateřina Velíšková, Člověk v tísní – People in Need

The Roma minorities continue to face significant obstacles in upwards social mobility and still face discrimination throughout EU member states (Effective Roma integration measures in the Member States 2016, European Commission, p. 8). Moreover, it seems that in many of the EU states, the anti-Gypsy rhetoric is gaining even more ground, despite the efforts to combat these tendencies through various country-specific pro-inclusive legislation (ibid, p. 8).

The Roma minorities often face different forms of exclusion from the mainstream society. Different types of exclusion have different consequences, but these are very often closely connected. Spatial exclusion is often represented by living in a poorly accessible place, which results in significantly lower standard of living. Economic exclusion is characterized by long-term unemployment and/or dependency on state's social system. Social exclusion often means that all social contacts and acquaintances fall under the family circle, where all members are in the same life situation. Culturally, excluded families also often lack wider cultural awareness and tend to be rather passive in searching for various activities. In families affected by long-term exclusion, even regular health checks and disease prevention become problematic (Training Module and materials for training of professional and for general public, 2017, p. 3).

Education is then tied to both social and cultural exclusion. Children often do not attend any pre-school education and are more likely to suffer from educational problems and school failure in mainstream education facilities (Early Childhood Education & Care & Long-term Effects, 2016, p. 8). This exclusion often manifests itself also by high absence, either with or without leave. As

for the parents, they often completed only elementary education, in the case of the Czech Republic often on former *special schools*.

Parents' experience with regard to education then reflects their attitudes while upbringing children. Parents are not familiar with preparation for education, are not aware of what activities cultivate what skills or what kind of knowledge is important for education. They are also not familiar with practices, which would encourage their children to be successful at school. Most importantly, they also lack motivation, because their own life experience suggests that education does not have any significant effect on one's life and does not contribute towards finding a place within the mainstream society.

Therefore, the key element for an appropriate way of supporting a socially disadvantaged child is not to judge his/her potential based on the differences between him/her and children growing up in other types of environments, which is also the basis of the newly introduced "Dynamic Diagnosis" in the School Law amendment in the Czech Republic. For ECEC professionals, it is crucial to build on the knowledge and competencies of a specific child and choose adequate methods of learning and exercises accordingly (We Say it Together/Vákerás jekhetáne: Methodology for supporting preschool education, 2016, p. 6).

One of the crucial measures for improving the status quo is therefore improving the access to early childhood education and care (ECEC), which has been proven to have a "long-lasting impact on educational outcomes and attainment, as well as on overall social, emotional, and physical development", especially for disadvantaged or marginalized children (Early Childhood Education & Care & Long-term Effects, p. 4). Accessing early childhood education can thus be used as a tool to reduce inequality and increase the chances of success in formal education for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (UNICEF, 2008, p. 11).

In the Czech context, inclusion in education continues to be a major challenge. According to the Amnesty International report, Roma

children continue to be “disproportionately placed in schools for pupils with mild mental disabilities, they are segregated in mainstream education, often ending up in Roma-only schools or separate classrooms, and even when they are integrated into mainstream classes, they often find themselves treated differently by teachers and classmates and frequently report racial bullying and prejudice (Amnesty International, 2016). This argument is further supported by the Special Report on Roma Inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care (RECI, p. 10).

It is therefore crucial to focus specifically on strengthening parental competencies of Romani parents and parents in threat of social exclusion. This work should also be designed on the principle of building on cultural and social appropriateness and search strategies on how to strengthen parental skills within a specific cultural context.

One of the possible approaches to this issue is to offer a rounded set of support measures and materials for empowering Romani and social disadvantage parents and children, focusing on contributing to increasing learning competencies a lasting change in attitudes towards education. An example of such an approach could be found through People in Need’s experience with eighteen years of Programs on Social Integration with goal of supporting families in their ability to learn and support learning of children (Sedláčková, Lánská, Ranglová, 2015).

Moreover, one of the key elements of proper child development which can be easily implemented by parents is phonemic perception. It is the ability to consciously break down words into phones and manipulate with them (Bytešníková, 2012, p. 115). It is also a crucial skill for learning how to read and write and an important aspect of preparing children from socially disadvantaged background for school education. The best way to enhance phonemic perception skills of a child is to talk to him/her, read stories and fairytales and listen to spoken word or audiobooks, sing and say nursery rhymes with clapping hands. These activities need to be regularly incorporated in the family schedule, as it is

usual in the most “middle-class” families, where these activities and their importance for child development are not always reflected, but are natural component of everyday activities. Parents from socially disadvantaged environment are, however, more often less inclined to read to their children, tell them stories or explain wider links about the world in general (We Say it Together/Vákerás jekhetáne: Methodology for supporting preschool education, p.4).

Furthermore, a lot of progress can be achieved by sharing the benefits of simple practices, strategies and tips that are easy to implement, but that also have crucial role in creating a stimulating learning environment and encouraging child learning and development. It is also useful to provide the parents with information and descriptions of different procedures, including children’s health care (dental care, paediatric care, etc.), preschool education (e.g. enrolment in preschool), procedures for obtaining incomes related to parenting, etc (We Say it Together/Vákerás jekhetáne: Methodology for supporting preschool education, p. 8, 10).

Lastly, another important part of this issue is raising the level of awareness of Romani parents from disadvantaged areas about the importance of early involvement of their children in the ECEC services and giving them support in their parenting skills for taking care of child’s health and development (We Say it Together/Vákerás jekhetáne: Methodology for supporting preschool education, p. 13).

3.4 Building trust and connecting preschool with different actors within the local community (Slovakia)

Miroslav Sklenka, Skola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o.

An important factor that positively affects the participation and achievement of children in preschools is cooperation with parents and the wider community. Roma parents, however, are not seen as equal partners in the life and work of the preschool, and are not actively involved in the broader educational processes and learning experiences of their children. Prevalent approaches to parental involvement are top-down, information-type approaches, rather than the active engagement of parents with approaches that respect and utilize their cultural and social capital.

According to the RECI+ Study (RECI+ Slovak Republic Report, 2017), formal links between school and community have multiple shortcomings, when it comes to supporting ECEC in our countries. There is no monitoring and evaluation of individual, family, and community needs, nor quality preparation for delivering such a service. However, there is convincing evidence that it is the informal relations and the encouragement of informal education in a family that supports a favourable welfare and learning environment for children, parents, and family members alike. Obstacles connected with the trust building between the Roma community and other relevant actors in the municipality life are influencing the broader community involvement into early childhood education and care, as well as examples of good practices. The evidence indicates that preschools do not generally have well-established direct cooperation with the families of enrolled children. Furthermore, there is no sound system of training or support programs for enhancing parental skills or family participation in educational activities. Most preschools do not organize training for parents, but if they do organize an event or activity, Roma parents often do not come as they feel that they are not welcomed. Inviting and involving parents in preschool events is important, as it strengthens the preschool's external communications with the family

and community. This rather narrows focus of engagement with parents does not strengthen so called „inward“ communication, though, and does not reflect the opinions, needs, or wishes of the child’s family unit. Mutually beneficial relationship between a preschool and the parent community require strategies for active engagement between the two, based on trust and mutual respect. Such developments need to be initiated from a preschool and formulated as part of the institution’s standard policies.

Improving the living conditions of marginalised people mainly entails measures to enhance their access to education, employment, health care, housing and social services. It is essential to recognize from the beginning that these aspects will need to be addressed in an integrated way. There is never one single cause of marginalization, but often a long list of them. Furthermore these causes are interrelated. Addressing one or only selected causes will not lead to change; the situation must be solved comprehensively and all causes must be addressed simultaneously. None of these causes can be underestimated.

Each area affects the others, so failing to address one area will impair progress in the other areas. For example, without good education it is difficult to find good employment. Poor housing conditions lead to bad health and also affect school performance. On the other hand education, employment, health and housing may be impacted negatively by the same cause. For instance, renovating roads or providing public transport can improve at the same time access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. A poor outcome in education, employment, health or housing often has multiple causes, which must be addressed together to make a positive impact. For example, building a new healthcare centre is by itself unlikely to improve the health of people. Health care workers, social workers or health mediators as well as transportation services will also be needed.

Issues that affect the Roma often concern the whole municipality and therefore need to be seen in this wider context. When public services provided to the Roma are of poor quality, it is very

likely that they are not much better for the whole population. Local authorities are responsible for improving this situation. Roma people know what they need, why they need it, what the barriers are, what can be done, what is affordable to them, and what can be maintained. Participation increases also ownership of the inclusion process by Roma themselves, thus increasing the chances that it will be sustained over time. At the same time, the participation of non-Roma people is also critical to gain their support, avoid stigmatization of Roma, and foster interaction and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma on the basis of mutual interests. The municipality representatives during their action have to target Roma because they are socially excluded and disadvantaged, not just because they are Roma, they have to customize actions to address specific local needs and address barriers to the access to public services.

Sklenka, M. and Sklenkova, D. (Rodicovstvo zalozene na dovere, 2016) have mentioned that the cooperation of all the relevant stakeholders is needed also in early childhood education care programs. In our countries, the crucial factor for education in preschools is the comprehensive and integrated approach. The most important partners for preschool staff are always parents and the wider community. Their contribution influences the educational results of children. It depends very much on the quality of the environment where children live. The quality of the environment depends on parental skills of parents that are the first educators of their children and they have to be competent. It means, that the target audience for preschool staff are also parents of children that are enrolled in preschools. Other relevant stakeholder in our situation is the municipality office. All the actors of the municipality life as mayors, local councillors or social workers highly influence the preschool and its operating. The founding authority that establishes the preschool and manages its activity is the municipality office. The municipality office also employs social field workers, community workers and health field workers. All these working positions are important for Roma children and their parents. They are contributing to other dimensions of everyday life as housing, employment and health through the advisory, consultan-

cy and home visiting educational programs. In order to achieve positive change in the quality of living in Roma communities, we have to break the closed and very complicated circle of poverty. To target our activity only on education will not bring us any sufficient results (Sklenka, M., Sklenkova, D., Zdravie a dieta, 2016).

According to the Council of Europe (ROMACT Handbook, 2016), experience of combating exclusion of Roma and other minorities across Europe shows that taking action at the local level is important for the following reasons:

- In most countries of Europe that have a significant Roma population, national strategies are now in place to promote Roma integration. However, national-level policies and strategies relating to minorities are unlikely to be effective unless some mechanism is found to implement them at the local level.
- The situation of Roma varies from locality to locality, as does the situation of the population generally. Therefore it is important that national-level policies relating to Roma are implemented flexibly, and adapted to meet local needs. The local level, especially that of the municipality, is the level at which the delivery of most public services is administered. Action needs to be taken to ensure these services meet the rights and needs of Roma, along with all other sections of the local population.
- Directly-elected municipal and other local authorities have political autonomy to decide on their approach to Roma issues. Action therefore needs to be taken at the local level to influence political decision-making on matters relating to Roma integration.
- The local level is the level at which Roma, like other minorities, can most easily organize to exercise their rights, represent their interests at political level, and engage collectively in the civic process. This can be achieved through the formation of local NGOs, including both Roma community associations, and NGOs working on civil rights and community issues generally.
- The level of the municipality, and especially the local neighborhood, is the level of meaning in most people's lives, i.e. which they know, care about, operate in, and feel they can have some

direct control over. In order to promote civic participation by Roma, and other excluded or marginal groups, local strategies need to reach not just regions and Municipalities, but also right down to neighborhood level.

- The local level is the level at which most innovation takes place, as enterprising individuals and NGOs develop creative practical solutions to new problems. National policy-makers should be willing to support local level enterprise and innovation, and then enable others to learn from it through promoting the dissemination of local ‘good practices’.

All organizations that have the ability to make a positive contribution to the integration of Roma should be involved in action at the local level. Public authorities are particularly important because they have legal and constitutional responsibilities to ensure that the rights of all citizens are recognized and implemented. Civil society also has an important role to play, both to advocate its interests at the political level and to cooperate actively in problem-solving (ROMACT manual, Council of Europe, 2016):

- Elected municipal authorities have a crucial role as the democratically elected representatives of the local population. They have important powers and responsibilities, often relating to a wide range of functions (e.g. housing, social welfare, education). They are often major local employers. They need to provide leadership on issues relating to Roma integration, and offer a model of good practice that others can follow.
- Regional-level administrations of the central government (e.g. prefectures) likewise have a crucial role. They too may be responsible for important functions and services at the local level, and can help to ensure that national government policy on Roma issues is translated into practice at the local level.
- Public authorities with particular functional responsibilities need to be involved, to ensure that the needs and rights of Roma are addressed effectively in their everyday operations locally. Authorities concerned with education, health, welfare, housing, policing and criminal justice will be particularly important.

- Local Roma NGOs are also essential because they can articulate the interests and concerns of local Roma people, and promote and support the participation of Roma in the civic process generally.
- Other civil society organizations at the local level may also be able to make an important contribution by focusing on Roma-related issues in their fields of activity, which might include human rights, legal advice and community development.
- Private businesses may also have a role to play, as they are local employers and may provide local services. They may be willing to contribute to their local community in various ways, including by sponsoring particular activities.

4

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

4.1 Latvia

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4.1.1 Introducing the Roma girl Ringla and the book “Damar’s Year”



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Introducing the Roma girl Ringla and the book “Damar's Year”.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Pre-school “Pasacina”, Preili Municipality.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

1 hour 30 minutes + 1 hour (Roma families had an opportunity to get acquainted with the pre-school and to talk with the pre-school teachers and principal).

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

To invite families of Roma children who are not enrolled in the pre-school and introduce them to the preschool and give an insight into what kindergarten can provide for their children in friendly and informal atmosphere.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for children:

- Encourage Roma children to take part in activities enjoying the pleasure of sharing games, playthings, reading books and learning;

- Promote mutual acquaintance, understanding, acceptance and cooperation.

Objectives for parents:

- To enable Roma parents to get acquainted with the pre-school education institution and practitioners working there;
- Promote mutual acquaintance, understanding, acceptance and cooperation.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

- Handmade doll, the screen, book “Damar's year”, magnifier, maple leaves, paper sticks, paper hand fans, white down, coloured petals, flower blanks coloured stickers, paper sheets, music records, music player.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

Preparation:

- *Informing about activity* – pre-school teachers informed and invited parents of children attending pre-school, but Roma assistant invited families of Roma children who are not enrolled in pre-school.

Activity:

- *Introducing with handmade doll* – Roma girl Ringla (the character of the children's book popular in Latvia). She is invited to the pre-school in the autumn. But there is one problem, the girl has not yet learned all the seasons and months. All together children decide to help her.
- *Story about autumn* – Children dance together when the song about autumn is played. Children who attend pre-school are inviting to dance together other children. After the dance, children call the autumn months, tell what happens in this season and what they are doing in pre-school during autumn. Then follows a fun game with maple leaves "Blow to the neighbour's side!" – children are divided by the line on the floor and they have to blow maple leaves to the opposite side.
- *Story about winter* – Children are invited to split in pairs (with a child or adult) and play with white downs like snowflakes by hand fans and do not letting to downs fall down to the ground. After the play the children call the winter months, tell what happens in this season and what they can in pre-school during this season.

- *Story about spring* – After the song about spring children listen to the voices of the birds, try to recognize them and name them. After the play the children call the spring months, tell what happens in this season and what they are doing in the preschool during spring.
- *Story about summer* – While the song about summer is played, children are invited to form groups by colours of the stickers what they have on their clothes. They are asked together with their parents to find petals of the same colour and together create flower in a group.
- *Closing*: Each child receives the gift – book “Damar’s year” together with magnifier. It is special book in Latvian and Romani languages about Roma boy Damar and his run throughout the year. Magnifier helps to explore small details of the illustrations. Children review the book together with their parents. After activity during one hour Roma families had an opportunity to get acquainted with the pre-school and to talk with the pre-school teachers and principal.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

During the activity everyone was participating with great interest, curiosity and joy. The activity passed in a favourable and very sincere atmosphere. Some of the youngest children had difficulties to work in the group or to focus attention, but older children and adults helped them.

At the end of the activity, the children were invited to evaluate the lesson by sticking the stickers to a smiley, neutral or sad face. Kids glued stickers to the smiley face, because they enjoyed the activity.

Parents got acquainted with each other, with the head of the preschool and teachers. They experienced the positive and interested attitude of the employees, saw how to promote their children's development with simple games, and made sure that Roma children and parents were not segregated.

Parents saw their children collaborating with others, they supported children and helped them, if necessary. All parents – Roma and non-roma – read the book in Romani language with great interest.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

As parents are invited, it is necessary to plan activities with involvement of parents. Very important is creation of open, safe and friendly atmosphere.

4.1.2 From play to book



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

From play to book.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Children's Literature Department of the Preili Municipality Main Library.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

1 hour 30 minutes.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

To introduce Roma parents with opportunities what is provided locally, to promote their interest and to encourage them the use of local resources (the library), to expand their personal experience.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for children:

- To encourage Roma and non-Roma children's interest in the books, the desire to learn to read;
- Enrich the world of feelings; develop attention, sensations, thinking, memory and imagination;
- Create an opportunity to work together, promote mutual acquaintance, understanding and cooperation.

Objectives for parents:

- To introduce Roma parents with the library, to get them familiar with the way how to lend books or use library as a place for children's playing.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

Developing games, books, books with surprises, head masks of the personages of fairy tale "The Turnip", toy vegetables, baskets.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

- *Introduction to the Children's Literature Department of the Preili Main Library* – All participants are getting acquainted with the Children's

Literature Department of the Preiļi Main Library: reception, reading room, playhouse, etc., as well as with information how to become a member of library. In the following, the children are briefly introduced with the different kinds of books (a small part of the extensive offer) that they can lend from the library.

- *Performance "The Turnip"* – Based on the idea that the texts of books after reading them can also be staged, the children were invited to become actors and to present for parents and other children the story "The Turnip" – well known fairy tale with many characters.
- *Dynamic break* – During the dynamic break, the children were invited to an educational game "Root Garden". All children were divided in two teams. The teams needed to quickly pick up and recognize the named vegetables.
- *Closing* – The children, independently and with their parents were invited to spend time in the library room at their own discretion (to watch and read books, play games, play in the playhouse, etc.).

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The visit to the Children's Literature Department was a very emotional and positive experience. Many children saw so many interesting books for the first time. A great surprise for the kids was that the library is a place where you can not only read books, but you can also play with toys and board games. The staging of fairy tale "The Turnip" also was caused by very bright emotions. Also all Roma parents, except for one, had the first time in the library, they became aware of the possibility to lend books and to leave 5 and 6 year old children in the library and the gaming hall for an hour, as well as they enjoyed the performance – they with attention and positive emotions followed their children's acting, applauded.

It was a very thoughtful, emotional, fun and exciting educational adventure.

- *"The Children's Library has a lot of books. I have not seen so many books."* (Denis, 4 years old).
- *"I really liked it. There are books and toys."* (Marina, 4 years old).
- *"I was already in the library with my grandmother, but I did not know that there are such interesting games also. And the fairy-tale "The Turnip" was very fun to play."* (Kristīne, 6 years old).

- *"I've never been to the library before. I really liked. I will go there with my mother now."* (Brendon, 5 years old).
- *"I liked the books with music, games. I want to go there again."* (Ruslan, 6 years old).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The fairy tale "The Turnip" can be replaced by any other, which has many characters and small roles. Very important is to create inviting and welcoming atmosphere.

4.1.3 Creative Workshop

**“One, Two, Three! Those others will be free!
Come play together!”**



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Creative Workshop "One, Two, Three!
Those others will be free! Come play together!"
(Secondary use of materials).

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Pre-school “Pasacina”, Preili Municipality.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

1 hour 30 minutes.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

To show parents of children who are not enrolled in the preschool how to promote children's development through simple and fun activities reusing various materials what can be find at home.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for children:

- To develop children's creativity, imagination;
- To develop a gentle attitude towards the environment, to encourage the use of secondary materials;
- To strengthen the ability to work with scissors, to attach glue to small details and to stick it;
- Improve the ability to work in groups and pairs.

Objectives for parents:

- To get acquainted with the skills to be learned by the child;
- To help parents see the things children already know and to encourage parents to support their children in developing of other necessary skills;
- To create a gentle attitude towards the environment, encouraging the retrieval of various materials for children's creative activities and games.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

Toilet paper rolls, cuttings of leather and cloth, application paper, eyelets, cords, scissors, glue, buttons, handmade doll Ringla.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

- *Introduction* – Ringla visits the group again. She gets acquainted with children and adults and wants to teach something new – invites everyone to participate in the Ringla's creative workshop.
- *Workshop activities for the secondary use of materials* – The teacher demonstrates what can be made from rolls of toilet paper; a house, a dog, a rabbit, etc. Children with parental support decide what and how they will create. They draw, cut out, prepare parts and glue them so that the roll becomes a "toy".
- While the children are making up the toys and parents are supporting and helping them, Ringla leads discussion about questions:
 1. *what children learn and practice by doing this,*
 2. *what else could be used from home-based, unnecessary things to improve children's skills, toy-making, play without large material investments, thus contributing to the child's development and focusing on "green thinking".*
- *Closing* – Presenting self-made toys to Ringla and evaluation of the workshop.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The children enrolled in the workshop with great pleasure. Making toys by themselves from secondary used materials (toilet paper roll) was interesting for both – children and parents. The children asked parents to help create not only playful characters, but also things needed for the game – flowers, a bench. After activity they fantasized and thought what else could be made of cardboard rolls. There was an offer to build an airplane, a car, a cat, a fox, etc.. The children were telling it to Ringla.

Parents saw what children learned through this creative workshop. Parents were encouraged to preserve the environment, avoid throwing out things that can be used repeatedly and teach to do so children too.

Workshop participants helped each other, activity passed in a positive atmosphere. Parents developed a good contact with the teacher (Ringla), were asking many questions about the parents' ability to support child development with the help of toys.

- *"It was sometimes difficult, but there was a lot of interesting things."* (Natali, 5 years old).
- *"Adults helped me, beautiful things came up."* (Markus, 6 years old).
- *"I like to have interesting ideas in these creative classes. After these classes, we and my daughter are happy to repeat activities at home. Thank you!"* (Kristin's (6 years old) mother).
- *"It was very good that we could work together with our children. Thanks for the work you have done. Honestly, at home sometimes it's not enough time to work with your child."* (Ruslan's (6 years old) mother).
- *"It is very enjoyable that our children were taught how to make such simple and interesting toys. I think we will create another interesting animal at home."* (Rustam's (6 years) grandmother).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

It is suggested to use some character or doll (as Ringla) for running the activity – it helps to create playful and safe atmosphere and facilitates conversations and discussions.

4.1.4 All together! Celebration of International Roma day



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

All together! Celebration of International Roma day.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Secondary school No.2, Preili Municipality.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

2 hours.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

To strengthen inclusion of Roma children and their families in educational institutions and local community, and to empower Roma parents by increasing their self-esteem and understanding of their rights and obligations.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for children:

- To strengthen the self-esteem of Roma children;
- To introduce other children with the history and culture of the Roma.

Objectives for parents:

- To strengthen the self-esteem of Roma parents;
- To empower parents (especially Roma parents) to care for their children even better and become great defenders of their children's rights;
- To expand the knowledge of other parents about the history and culture of the Roma.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

Recordings of Roma music, PP presentation about the history and culture of the Roma, computer, projector, basket with candies, yarn, scissors, wooden daisies, Roma girl suits, book "Child's and parents' rights and obligations".

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

- *Introduction* – All participants – Roma and non-Roma children and their family members – were invited to watch the presentation complimented by storytelling about the history and culture of Roma. In this presentation a Roma flag was shown, their anthem was played and various images depicting the history and culture of the Roma were presented, as well as images of famous, well-known people of Roma origin in Latvia and in the world.
- *The quiz* – After presentation questions about the Roma traditions, language and history were asked. For the correct of fun answers children and parents received candies.
- *Dance lesson* – Two Roma girls performed dance in gorgeous and beautiful Roma costumes, but after that all participants were invited to learn some dance moves.
- *Creative workshop* – Every child was invited to work at the creative workshop where they made wicker belts, which were used earlier in everyday life (horse trimmings or straps, cloth dressing, etc.). In the end there wicker belts were presented to children as a bracelets.
- *Child's and parent's rights* – While children were participating at the workshop, parents are introduced with the book “Child's and parents' rights and obligations” and how it can help to empower them to become great defender of their children's rights. All parents received the book as a present. After that they joined their children for workshop.
- *Closing* – Shared "thank you" in Romani language and photo (who want to take a picture).

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

Roma parents self-confidence was strengthened, while listening to facts about the history of Roma, genocide against Roma during the Second World War, a richness of Roma culture. For the rest of the parents, many facts about the Roma were new information – it provided new insights about Roma and expanded awareness.

School children at the beginning were shy to speak Romani or to participate in dances, but later they joined activities when they saw how enthusiastic

little one's are, for example, how 4 years old Denis was teaching all participants to count till 5 in Romani.

- *"Yup! I really liked everything!"* (Victoria, 6 years old).
- *"I loved the beautiful dances and dresses."* (Liāna, 4 years old).
- *"I liked the dance. It was beautiful. And then we got some gifts."* (Maxim, 6 years old).
- *"I like to dance. And I 've got a candy for counting till 5 in Romani language."* (Denis, 4 years old).
- *"It was fun! I liked dancing, dresses and self-made bracelets."* (Jelizaveta, 5 years old).
- *"It was interesting and fun as our Denis danced, and also presents – a bracelet and candy."* (Kristin, 6 years old).
- *"I never had made a belt before. It was interesting to make something nice with our own hands. Everything was very interesting, prepared with the heart and created positive emotions."* (Vasilisa's (4years old) mother).
- *"It was interesting to work together with the child. I realized that this should be done more often. The whole event was interesting, but the book showing rights and duties will be very useful."* (Valerian's mother).
- *"What a beautiful music! The costumes of the Roma dancers were very beautiful. I liked everything very much."* (Victoria's Mother).
- *"I liked everything. I did not know before that the Roma don't have unified script. I did not know much about the history of this people, the flag, the anthem. It was very interesting for me! Very beautiful costumes!"* (Leana's mother).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The book "Child's and parents' rights and obligations" in English is available to anyone interested at: http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/1_Material-for-parents.pdf

4.2 Slovenia

Lenka Miklavčič, Preschool Šentvid

4.2.1 Creation of multilingual picture book

»With Friends to the Seaside = Prijatelni lenca pu mori«

TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Creation of multilingual picture book »With Friends to the Seaside = Prijatelni lenca pu mori«.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Preschool Šentvid and Roma settlement.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

3 meetings of 2 hours.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

- to create a picture book in Romani language (In September 2015, a Roma girl and a Roma boy joined our group. They only spoke Romani language and did not understand the Slovene language. In order to get closer to them, we searched for Romani children's literature, but was quite unsuccessful. Therefore the idea to create our own picture book was born);
- to connect the families from the group (17 non-Roma and 1 Roma families), provide them the opportunity to get to know each other and also;
- to invite Roma families with children who are not enrolled in preschool yet to become familiar with the preschool environment, ECEC professionals and what would contribute to their decision to enroll their child in preschool.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for children:

- to promote pre-literacy skills,
- to promote language development,
- to promote awareness of the existence of one's own and other languages, and one's own and also other cultures,

- to encourage creativity,
- to connect parents, children and ECEC,
- to experience success and joy when creating.

For children who are not enrolled in preschool also:

- to become familiar with the preschool environment and
- to become familiar with with other children.

Objectives for parents:

- getting to know the preschool as an institution and participate within preschool activities,
- networking,
- to promote awareness of the existence of one's own and other languages, and one's own and other cultures.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

Drawing sheets, colored pencils, various picture books, didactic materials and small rhythmic instruments.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

1. meeting in preschool:

- informal socializing: coffee/tea and snacks,
- after the informal socializing we invited children to brainstorm and to propose main actors of the fairytale,
- afterwards children were telling their stories and creating a common story,
- adults encouraged children to telling the fairytale by asking questions and writing down their ideas.

2. meeting in preschool:

- informal socializing: coffee/tea and snacks,
- children were offered the art material (paper, colored pencils ...) and asked to draw individual scenes from the fairy tale,
- we read the fairy tale together and some children have supplemented the content, in addition to creating a fairy tale, children explored the play room and toys, played with didactic materials, small rhythmic instruments and socialize with each other.

3. meeting in Roma settlement:

- one of the Roma parents translate the content of the fairy tale in Romani language: »With Friends to the Seaside = Prijatelni lenca pu mori«.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

Roma and other children were enthusiastic, and their parents were proud of them.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

In September 2015, a Roma girl and a Roma boy joined our group in pre-school. They only spoke Romani language and did not understand the Slovene language. In order to get closer to them, we searched for Romani children's literature, but was quite unsuccessful. Therefore the idea to create our own picture book was born. A picture book *With Friends to the Seaside = Prijatelni lenca pu mori*« has been lectured, designed and printed. You can find it on the following link http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/S_Prijatelji_Na_Morje.pdf

4.2.2 Puppet show: With friends to the Seaside



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Puppet show: With friends to the Seaside.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Roma settlement.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

3,5 hours.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Building trust between Roma families and preschool staff and language development of children.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for children:

- getting to know preschool teachers and
- building trust between children and preschool teachers,
- promoting linguistic abilities,
- encouraging creativity.

Objectives for parents:

- building trust and
- getting to know preschool teachers in a familiar, informal environment,
- raising awareness about the importance of enrollment Roma children in preschool.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

- scene elements for the puppet show “With friends to the seaside” (puppets: horse Winston, frog, ladybird, wolf, snake, goose, rabbit, farmer, bus),
- chairs and desks (tables),
- materials for making horses (rods, wool socks, buttons, needles, threads and leather),
- colors, paper, colorings,
- drinks and snacks: tray of pancakes, juice, potatoes for baking on embers,
- wood for making fire.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

- set up chairs and tables,
- preparation of the scene for the outdoor theater (drawn on the sheets, which we fixed between two trees, in front of the scene, we set up tables and arranged chairs - outdoor theater,
- father of one child, who is enrolled in our preschool, showed us the place where we could lit the fire,
- we invited families to have some pancakes and juice,
- performance of the puppet show "With friends to the seaside" for children and also parents (show was created together with Roma and kindergarten children in previous workshops),
- we offered children puppets to play with and encouraged them to talk and perform,
- workshop for children: making horses on rods, drawing, coloring,
- informal socializing with parents by the fire.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

All Roma participants were excited. When we were leaving the settlement, some of the Roma parents thanked us for coming. When one of the Romani children came to kindergarten, his mother told us that she enjoyed the show and stressed that it is good for children to attend kindergarten.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This activity, in which ECEC professionals visit Romani children and parents in their home environment, is extremely important in terms of building trust. When planning activities in the Roma settlement, it is necessary to get the consent of parents to carry out the activity and gain information on available facilities in the settlement for implementation of the planned activity. In case there is no suitable place for the activity (space with a roof etc.) in the Roma settlement, the outdoor activity should be adapted to weather conditions and activity provider should bring all the necessary equipment for carrying out activities (such as chairs, tables etc.).

4.2.3 Creative workshop and New Year's concert

TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Creative workshop and New Year's concert.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Preschool Šentvid.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

2 hours.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Building trust between Roma families and preschool staff and establishing contacts between Roma and non-Roma families.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for Romani children:

- getting to know the preschool,
- participate within preschool activities,
- building trust between them and preschool staff,
- encouraging creativity,
- getting experience with acting,
- getting to know Slovene language and culture,
- promoting sensitivity to diversity.

Objectives for other children:

- getting to know Romani language in culture,
- promoting sensitivity to diversity.

Objectives for Romani parents:

- getting to know the preschool as an institution,
- participate within preschool activities,
- building trust between them and preschool staff,
- getting to know Slovene language in culture,
- promoting sensitivity to the ethical dimension of diversity.

Objectives for other parents:

- getting to know Romani language in culture,
- promoting sensitivity to the ethical dimension of diversity.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

- glass jars, glass paints, waterproof pens,
- New Year's ornaments,
- modelling clay for designing decorations,
- paper and colors,
- oranges and cloves,
- drinks and snacks.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?*Part 1:*

Before New Year's concert Roma children who are not enrolled in preschool and their families (with exception of two children) were invited to the workshop into preschool:

- informal socializing: coffee/tea and snacks,
- after the informal socializing we invited children to painting on the lanterns and making New Year's decorations,
- parents were encouraged to help their children painting on the lanterns and making New Year's decorations.

Part 2:

After the workshop Roma families were invited to the New Year's concert which was attended also by children from three groups and their parents (50 families):

- each group of children introduced themselves with some songs (accompanied by one of the mothers on the piano),
- first one of the Roma girls sang a song about the mouse and later three children joined her and sang a song about the watermelon,
- the accordionist also participated in the concert - besides Christmas songs, he also played Roma folk music,
- after the concert we went for a walk with lanterns around the preschool.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

All the children were proud of their performance. One of the Roma mothers was very touched and after the concert she told us in tears, that she was very proud of her son and his first performance. They were also impressed by the performance of the accordion player, who played Roma music.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Before this event, we went to the Roma settlement to invite them to the concert. It was important that we present Roma children and their families the idea of participating in the concert on time and encouraged and helped them to perform. It is also very important to arrange transport to the preschool and back to the Roma settlement (if necessary). In our case parents did not have possibility to bring children to preschool. If transport wasn't organized, the children wouldn't come to the preschool.

4.2.4 Visit to the ZOO

TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Visit to the ZOO.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

ZOO Ljubljana.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

3,5 hours.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Connection of Roma with wider community.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for children:

- building trust between them and preschool staff,
- visit to the Zoo (almost for all this was the first visit to the zoo), getting to know different species and observing animals when feeding and being cared for,
- getting to know wider local environment.

Objective for parents:

- building trust between them and preschool staff,
- visit to the Zoo (almost for all this was the first visit to the ZOO), getting to know different species and observing animals when feeding and being taken care of,
- getting to know wider local environment.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

- Drinks and snacks,
- ZOO tickets.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

Driving to the ZOO:

- ECEC professionals came by bus to the settlement to pick up Roma families at 15.30;

- ECEC professionals welcomed them and invited them to the bus.
- The conversation on the bus began with questions about their expectations regarding the trip and a relaxed atmosphere developed.

Visit to the ZOO:

- watching performance of the sea lion,
- observing animals; much attention was drawn to monkeys, tiger and elephant,
- children ate snacks and played on the playground,
- adults also ate meal and chatting with each other.

On the way back home:

- around 19:00 bus picked us up and drove us back to the settlement,
- on the way back home we were socializing in a relaxed atmosphere, talking about experiences and impressions of the day.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The children were extremely enthusiastic and surprised. They were smiling, asking different questions about animals and enjoyed direct contact with domestic animals.

Parents were also very enthusiastic. In the interviews that we carried out at the end of the project most of them pointed out that the visit to the ZOO gave them most joyful experience. They estimated that the children, as well as themselves, were most pleased with the fact that they were given this opportunity, which otherwise they would not get it. And they were grateful that their wishes had been fulfilled.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This activity was important because Romani parents and children wanted to visit the ZOO and their voice was heard. That is an important contribution for strengthening trust and cooperation between parents and ECEC professionals. It is also important to emphasize that If necessary it is very important to arrange transport to the ZOO and back to the Roma settlement (if necessary). In our case parents did not have possibility to bring children to the ZOO. If transport wasn't organized, the children wouldn't come to the ZOO.

Translation:
Petra Zgonec and Petra Bozovičar, Educational Research Institute

4.3 Czech Republic

Kateřina Velíšková, *Člověk v tísní – People in Need*

4.3.1 We Say it Together – Tale of a Little Tongue



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

We Say it Together – Tale of a Little Tongue.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

This activity has been carried out in a PIN preschool club on an afternoon 16. 2. 2017 and both the children from the club and their mothers were present.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

3 hours.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

The goal of the activity was to show to parents various exercises on pronunciation and articulation and to inform them about the importance of practicing pronunciation. This was done through presenting the Tale of a Little Tongue, which is one of the project outputs, and talking the parents through the various exercises and their benefits. This activity was prepared in cooperation with logopaedist and was also translated in Romani language.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this activity were familiarization with the materials, learning how to work with them and understanding the importance of pronunciation practice.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

As for materials, we have used worksheets “We Say it Together – Tale of a Little Tongue”.*

*https://www.varianty.cz/download/docs/2632_r-i-ka-me-si-spolec-ne-pohadka-o-jazy-c-ku.pdf).

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

At first, the material was presented to the parents. Then, the parents went through the exercises with their children under the guidance of trained PIN employees and tried the various activities together. Lastly, the materials were discussed, the parents had the opportunity to ask further questions or state their comments.

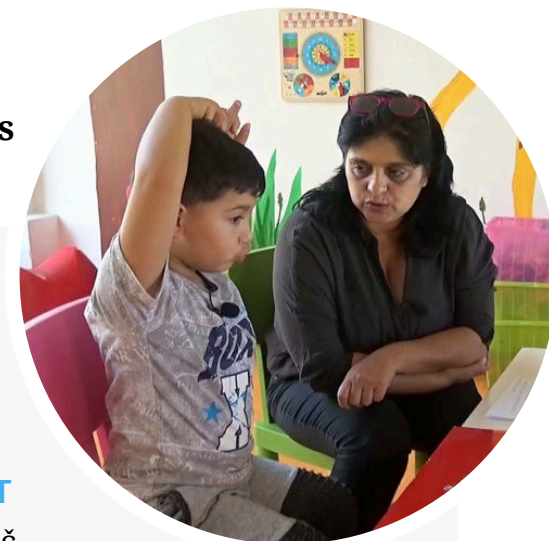
WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The reaction of the participants was positive. The children were smiling, concentrated closely on the activities and enjoyed practicing exercises with their tongues. The parents were also interested and asked questions, but they were surprised by written Romani, because they were more used to speaking it than seeing it written. They also shared information on how much their children know or understand Romani.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The one thing to focus on is making sure that the parents understand everything, so that they can use this material on their own in the future.

4.3.2 We Say it Together – Learning Phones: focusing on the letter F and on breath exercises



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

We Say it Together – Learning Phones: focusing on the letter F and on breath exercises.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

This activity has been carried out in a preschool MŠ Pastelka in Ústí nad Labem on 8. 6. 2016. Both children from the preschool and children from a PIN preschool club were present.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

The activity lasted for approximately two hours.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

The purpose of this activity was to practise using the worksheets "Learning Phones", to practice the phone F, learn some new breath exercises and also experience a joined activity with both the children from the preschool and the PIN preschool club.

OBJECTIVES

The objective for the children was thus both practising pronunciation and breath exercises and getting to know each other and the environment in the preschool.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

The materials used were taken from the "We Say it Together – Learning Phones" worksheets*, specifically the sheet with the phone F and cut out stripes of paper with pictures of violets (which start with the letter F in Czech). Moreover, a picture of a parrot Ferda, straws and feathers were used.
*https://www.varianty.cz/download/docs/2627_r-i-ka-me-si-spolec-ne-cvic-i-me-hla-sky.pdf)

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

The activity was commenced by a rhyme and saying Hi to one another. Then followed a little story on good breathing, making sure that everyone

was breathing comfortably (or if they are experiencing nasal stuffiness etc.). The children then practised a correct pronunciation of the phone F and carried out a breath exercise with blowing into paper stripes with violets. After that, there was again a little story, now talking about birds: How do they look like, what do they have on their bodies, what kinds of birds the children know. At the same time, children could take a look at the different feathers including one big feather of an eagle. Also, the parrot Ferda was introduced. Next up, the children carried out some more breath exercises: blowing into feather or blowing into feather with a straw. Then, breath exercises and movement were combined through imitating balloons: inhaling, inflating one's cheeks and then bursting. At the end, the rhymes were repeated.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

Children were very interested in these activities and were active throughout the whole session. They really enjoyed playing with the different props and trying them all out. The teachers experienced again, that the children do not differentiate between the children from the preschool and the children from the PIN preschool club.

All the planned parts of the session were carried out successfully and there was no need to adjust it in any way at the spot. The children tried all of the activities and were the most interested when working with the different props. One further benefit was that the children got to experience a pleasant session together and even played at a playground together after the end. Apart from the contribution to speech development, this session was also helpful for the children from the PIN preschool club as they got used to the preschool environment and got excited about enrolling there in the next school year.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Also, it was very helpful for the children to see themselves in the mirror while pronouncing the two phones.

4.3.3 We Say it Together – My Day at Preschool



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

We Say it Together – My Day at Preschool.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

This activity was carried out in a PIN preschool club in Prague on 1. 3. 2017.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

The activity lasted approximately an hour.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

The goal of this activity was to make the children aware of their own self, help shaping their individual identity and learning some rules.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the children of the club were firstly to try to picture themselves and then to learn about some of the rules of the PIN club and why they are in place.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

As for materials, the worksheets from "We say it together – My Day at Preschool"* were used, namely the sections: "This is Me", "Quietly", "Washing our hands", "We listen, when our friends are talking", *<http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/My-day-at-preschool-resize-10.pdf>

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

At first, the teachers asked all the children, who they are and wrote their names in the worksheets. Then, each of the children was given a mirror, so that they could draw themselves on the worksheet. Each of the children then drew their own self-portrait using coloured pencils or crayons. After that, all the children introduced each other in a circle, because there were also some new children at the club. Next, the teachers and the children discussed some rules of the club and why they have them: because there is a lot of people together, so there are some rules so that everyone feels safe and comfortable.

Some of the rules were then introduced using the worksheets and the children learned, why they are important.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The children really enjoyed examining themselves in the mirror and laughed. Some of the children, who have seen the worksheets before, were all aware of the pictures on them, including the details.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The teachers felt that a rule such as "Being kind to one another" was missing in the worksheets and also, that only one sheet about listening when someone else is speaking is necessary. At first, the teachers were also afraid that the space on the worksheets, where the children are supposed to draw, is too small. However, that turned out not to be the case and there was enough space for the children to express themselves.

4.3.4 We Say it Together – Learning Phones: focusing on letter S and Š, motor skills and vocabulary



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

We Say it Together – Learning Phones: focusing on letter S and Š, motor skills and vocabulary.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

This activity has been carried out on 12. 4. 2017 in a PIN preschool club In Prague.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

The activity lasted approximately 30 minutes.

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

The goal of this activity was to practise pronunciation, listening analysis and synthesis, practising motor skills and vocabulary.

OBJECTIVES

The objective for the children was to practise the above-mentioned skills, plus to learn to recognize phones S and Š through hearing and also pronounce them properly.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

The worksheets "We Say it Together – Learning Phones"* were used, specifically the part on S and Š. Plus, the teachers have used pictures of animals and everyday objects and mirrors. *https://www.varianty.cz/download/docs/2627_r-i-ka-me-si-spolec-ne-cvic-i-me-hla-sky.pdf

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

At first, the children played out different animals, trying out their movements and noises, while the teachers showed them pictures of each animal. Then, two pictures from the worksheets were introduced: a snake (trying hissing, practising correct pronunciation of the phone S and the position of the tongue with a mirror) and a locomotive (sound of a train, practising correct pronunciation of the phone Š).

After that, the teacher showed a series of pictures to the children, who then needed to name them and decide, if the name contains phone S or Š.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The children got the chance to practise their motor skills and their vocabulary. Plus, they learned about the phones S and Š and learned to recognize them. They enjoyed the motion activity and imitated the sounds of different animals loudly.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Also, it was very helpful for the children to see themselves in the mirror while pronouncing the two phones. The majority of the children was able to pronounce the two phones correctly and those, who did not, understood what they need to practise. At first, it was very difficult for the children to differentiate between the two sounds. In the end, at least some of them were able to do that. The teachers expressed that this activity is overall too difficult for children aged three or four, but it is possible to include it in the program from time to time.

4.4 Slovakia

Miroslav Sklenka, *Skola dokoran – Wide Open School n. o.*,
Anna Mandulova and Michaela Lichancova,
Materska skola, Kosice – Lunik IX

4.4.1 Working with ECEC professionals, Romani parents and their children



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Working with ECEC professionals,
Romani parents and their children.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

- Preschool, Hrebendova 5, Kosice – Lunik IX, Slovak Republic;
- Fieldwork, home visits.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

01.09.2016 – 31.07.2017 (total: 20 meetings for 2 hours).

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

The purpose of the carried out activity was to improve the parenting skills of Roma parents in order to achieve better preparation of their children when entering the elementary school. We decided to present this activity because of our long-term professional experience in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care in marginalized Roma communities across the Europe.

OBJECTIVES

- *Roma Families (both children and parents):* to strengthen Roma families in segregated and marginalised locality, by supporting parents (both mothers and fathers) in their efforts at raising their children in a safe, secure and caring family environment, offering parents information and knowledge regarding early childhood development, the importance of their role, information regarding alternative, effective parenting techniques (such as alternative approaches to discipline and punishment, play and learning, etc.), foster improved communication and understanding between

parents and their children (through encouraging parents to invest in spending quality time with their children and support their development through activities with them), supplementing the discovery and learning experiences of their children (through a better understanding of children's development), and promoting positive parental attitudes towards education (particularly in the early years) throughout their children's school years.

- *Wider community*: to achieve greater social integration and improved cohesion between Roma communities and the non-Romani communities close to these settlements.
- *Local Administration representatives*: to achieve the engagement of the local municipal authorities in each locality, in the implementation of the activity, in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the delivery in the short term and the long-term sustainability.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

- Parenting with Confidence – training manual (Skola dokoran - Wide Open School n. o., Ziar nad Hronom, Slovak Republic, 2016).
- Children and Health – training manual (Skola dokoran - Wide Open School n. o., Ziar nad Hronom, Slovak Republic, 2016).

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

- *Education for Social Justice workshops* – Activities are used to evoke themes. They help and stimulate participants to try new knowledge, skills in concrete training situation, or in simulated everyday situations. These are activities that can be implemented in a psychologically safe environment and they do not cause discomfort and negative feelings;
- *Parenting with Confidence workshops* – Interactive training linked to discussion, exchange of experiences related to working in Roma families, brainstorming, mind mapping, presentations, individual work, work with literature, role plays, song, rhymes, music to develop elements of literacy and key competencies of children, example of simple toys, solving of various situations, creation, imagination, building key competencies, etc.
- *Home visits* – targeting on presentation of theoretical knowledge in the real situation in Roma households;
- *Social Field Advisory* – in the area of promoting education;

- *Health Field Assistance* – promotion of vaccination, connecting Roma community with local medical service.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

Very positive reactions from the side of Romani parents. They will use the gained knowledge in their future parenting life, sharing the experience also inside their wider families. They really appreciated the newly built connection with the pre-school and ECEC professionals.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

It is very important to involve also Local Administration representatives, because without their contribution it will not be possible to ensure the continuation and sustainability of this good practice.

4.4.2 Social competences for children at an early age



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Social competences for children at an early age.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Preschool, Hrebendova 5, Kosice – Lunik IX,
Slovak Republic;

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

01.07.2017 – 31.08.2017 (total: 5 meetings for 2 hours).

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Specific to Roma communities, parental involvement is key in a child's success in school. These workshops, through their family engagement component, offered opportunities for communities around children to engage and learn. They help parents become familiar with the main themes of the programme and enables them to support the child's learning process at home. Teachers are trained about the importance of parental involvement and given practical tips for engagement and interaction. Roma are part of a wider society that is very concerned with them. Children who will followed these workshops are more likely to be aware of their rights and responsibilities and more likely to be part of a society that includes them in civic life, building their confidence at the same time. We decided to present this component due to the fact, that this education at an early age is a new programme in our countries, especially in Roma communities.

OBJECTIVES

ECEC professionals:

- ECEC professionals will raise their competences in working with the target group of children. They learn how to raise the social and civic competences of their target groups.

Target group of children:

- Children will first of all learn their social and civic competences. They will become more aware of the world around them. They will learn how

important it is to be the active member of our society and how to bring the positive change for their communities.

Parents:

- Parents will be fully involved in the learning process of their children. They will get different tasks, what to do with their children and how to raise their competences in the family life. The cooperation between the preschool and parents will strengthen. Parents become more aware about the preschool educational system and will be more able to help teachers with their work.

Relevant stakeholders:

- We expect that stakeholders become more aware how the social and civic competences as well as financial literacy are important even in the early age. They will be more open for discussion with the teachers and directors of preschools. We expect that the plan for the systematic change will be set up and we will follow the steps to implement it on our national levels as well as on international levels.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

No extra didactic material needed.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

Content of workshops:

- Personal Understanding and Exploration;
- Rights and Responsibilities;
- Storytelling – Children are born learners and they learn by example and experience. Although preschoolers do not pay attention very long, sometimes only a few minutes,
- Music – Music is a venue for creative, social and emotional expression. Children invent music in a very natural and easy way;
- Arts and Crafts – Providing opportunities for expression of feelings and exploration of new materials and resources will help children to build knowledge of the world around them;
- Poetry – Offers humor/laughter, brings warmth. Children learn rhymes which stimulate their imagination. they learn new words and new ideas;
- Group games (indoor/outdoor) – Children learn by playing. Games help teach the meaning of words.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

Early Childhood is the most critical time for positive intervention. Children's development during this stage is strongly affected by their environments, and that effect continues to exert a strong influence on the rest of their lives. It is crucial that education and life-skills programmes also begin at this early stage. That's why all the participants (ECEC professionals, Roma parents and their children at an early age) liked the programme and will continue in education and training also after the project will end.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

It is very important to involve also Local Administration representatives, because without their contribution it will not be possible to ensure the continuation and sustainability of this good practice.

4.4.3 Children's picture books creation



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Children's picture books creation.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Preschool, Hrebendova 5, Kosice – Lunik IX,
Slovak Republic.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

01.09.2016 – 31.07.2017 (total: 5 meetings for 2 hours).

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

The purpose of the carried out activity was to prepare an educational material reflecting needs and capacity of Roma parents and their children by themselves, as well as to help Roma parents to be able to pay all the obligatory payments for schooling and additional services by their own children and their creative work.

A picture book combines visual and verbal narratives in a book format, most often aimed at young children. The images in picture book use a range of media such oil paints, acrylics, watercolor, and pencil, among others. Picture books are most often aimed at young children, and while some may have basic language especially designed to help children develop their reading skills, most are written with vocabulary a child can understand but not necessarily read. For this reason, picture books tend to have two functions in the lives of children: they are first read to young children by adults, and then children read them themselves once they begin learning to read.

OBJECTIVES

Roma Families (both children and parents):

- to support the creative talent of Roma children and their parents;
- to enable them the preparation of educational materials according to their needs and financial possibilities.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

No extra didactic material needed.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

- Workshop on creation of picture books;
- Brainstorming on narrative content of the picture book;
- Preparation of drawings;
- Finalization of text content;
- Translation of the text from Slovak language to Romani language;
- Printing and distribution.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

Very positive reactions especially from the side of Romani parents who will have access to quality educational materials without any extra financial costs.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

During various workshops, training and other formal and non-formal educational activities are Roma parents and children taught by using highly professional training materials that are not financially achievable for them and their living situation. That's why we all need to teach them how to prepare teaching materials for their children by their own. There are plenty of materials in our everyday life that are able to eventually replace very expensive didactic materials with the same meaning and quality.

4.4.4 Free-time activities in cooperating preschool



TITLE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

Free-time activities in cooperating preschool.

PLACE WHERE ACTIVITY WAS CARRIED OUT

Preschool, Hrebendova 5, Kosice – Lunik IX, Slovak Republic.

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITY

01.09.2016 – 31.07.2017 (total: 10 meetings for 2 hours).

PURPOSE OF THE CARRIED OUT ACTIVITY

We have decided to present this activity because of our unique experience with the schooling self-financing by Roma children and their creative talent.

A big number of Roma children are visiting the Preschool in Kosice – Lunik IX and several dozens of parents go to nursery school for activation work. The child's food is paid by parents, but their tuition fees are paid by children themselves for painting and subsequent sale of pictures. It started on a charity Roma ball. The agency that the event organized had asked the preschool to deliver pictures for that event. Subsequently, paintings were sold to the participants of the ball. Paintings are everywhere in the preschool. Children love to paint, create, they love to work. Most pictures will find their buyer. Some of them even decorate the Office of the Minister of the Slovak Government.

OBJECTIVES

Roma Families (both children and parents):

- to provide more Roma children with the appropriate education in an early age because of the financial profit from the selling of their own creative products.

REQUIRED DIDACTIC AND OTHER MATERIAL

Material for creative art and culture.

HOW WAS THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

- Workshops with Roma children of painting;

- Painting of pictures and their presentation on various events;
- Making a small profit and its using for paying for schooling.

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

Very positive reactions especially from the side of Romani parents. Small profit made from the selling of paintings helped them to be able to solve the problem with regular monthly fees for schooling and additional services for their children.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For people coming from socially disadvantaged environment is sometimes almost impossible to find a way how to finance costs related to the educational process in preschool. Their own small profit activity could contribute to this very important educational part of their children's lives.

5

MATERIALS, ISSUED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INITIATIVE

Petra Bozovičar and Petra Zgonec, Educational Research Institute

5.1 Latvia

5.1.1

TITLE

Damar's Year= Damara gads.

DESCRIPTION

The book is aimed at strengthening the knowledge of children of pre-school age about the processes in nature and events in each month of the year, contributing to the acquisition of monthly titles.

The book is designed as a multilingual material with three languages – Latvian, Russian and Romani – to promote the inclusion of elements of multicultural education in day-to-day pre-school education.

WEB LINK

- http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/Damara_gads_10.02.pdf

5.1.2

TITLE

What to do with Piksis? = Ko darīsim ar Piksi?

DESCRIPTION

This book is designed to help kids under the age of 3 to learn the names of the garment, get to know the colors and practice their fingers to hold the pencil and paint in a certain area. It is created as a multilingual material in Latvian and Romani languages to promote inclusion of educational elements of multiculturalism in preschool everyday work. The lines below the text allow to complete them with a translation in any other language.

WEB LINK

- http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/Gramata_par_Piksi_10.02.pdf

5.1.3

TITLE

Child's and parents' rights and obligations = Bērnu un vecāku tiesības un pienākumi.

DESCRIPTION

The book has been created as an informative material or a guide book to help and support Roma parents. It is written in a simple and easy way to understand language and it introduces the reader with the most important children and parent's rights and obligations under the international and Latvian law.

WEB LINK

- In English: <http://online.pubhtml5.com/wjwi/mhhz/>
- In Latvian: <http://online.pubhtml5.com/wjwi/cmqf/>

5.1.4 TITLE

Recommendations for policy makers in the field of inclusion of Romani children into preschool programs.

DESCRIPTION

The Recommendations have been worked out on the bases of the analysis and evaluation of the realized project activities and are intended to be a tool for the local and national policy makers to promote early childhood education for Roma children. The Recommendations include both content and structural recommendations that are applicable to local circumstances and priorities.

WEB LINK

- In English: http://iic.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RECOMMENDATIONS_CEI_Eng.pdf
- In Latvian: <http://iic.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Rekomendacijas.pdf>

5.2 Slovenia

5.2.1 TITLE

About the preschool.

DESCRIPTION

Leaflet About the preschool is intended to inform parents about:

- the importance of including their children in preschool,
- the course of the day in preschool,
- the participation between the preschool, family and local community and about,
- the procedure of enrolling a child in preschool.

A multilingual leaflet, written in Slovene and Romani, with the possibility of including an additional translation of the text, is intended for a wider use in the process of including children and their parents from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in preschool.

WEB LINK

- in English and Romani language: <http://online.pubhtml5.com/yogo/vkxx>
- in Slovenian and Romani language: <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/O-vrtcu.pdf>

5.2.2

TITLE

Let's do it together!

DESCRIPTION

Material for parents and children consists of attractively illustrated cards, which offers ideas for activities that parents can do together with their children. It also offers an opportunity for children to play with cards, to place parts of different activities in the correct order. The material is intended for empowering parents in educational work and promoting children's development through playing together with a child or through activities, presented in the material.

WEB LINK

- in English and Slovenian language: <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/Download-File.pdf>

5.2.3 TITLE

With Friends to the Seaside / Prijatelni lenca pu mori.

DESCRIPTION

The picture book was created by children themselves, under the mentorship of preschool teachers, at one of the meetings in kindergarten, attended by Roma children and their parents. It is written in Slovene and Romani language, with the possibility of including additional translation of the text.

WEB LINK

- in Slovenian language: http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/S_Prijatelji_Na_Morje.pdf

5.2.4 TITLE

National Guidelines for the inclusion of Roma children and their parents into preschool programs.

DESCRIPTION

National guidelines for the inclusion of Roma children and their parents into preschool programs are aimed at kindergartens and municipalities as the founders of kindergartens and relevant policy decision makers in the field of education.

WEB LINK

- in English language: http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/04/ANGL_Smernice_elektronska_verzija.pdf
- in Slovenian language: http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/12/Smernice_elektronska_verzija-slo.pdf

5.3 Czech Republic

5.3.1

TITLE

Říkáme si společně / Můj den ve školce / Miro dives andre školka / My day at preschool.

DESCRIPTION

Material for children are worksheets to support children in learning daily schedule, daily rules and routines. Not less important is to strengthen children's relationships towards themselves, their families and teachers.

Children can color the materials and illustrate them with their own pictures. Parents and teachers can use the materials and additional cards to play with children and can add headings with the language of children if different from Czech or Romani.

WEB LINK

- Czech and Romani version: <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/My-day-at-preschool-re-size-10.pdf>
- Additional material - cards with pictures: <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/pdfresizer.com-pdf-resize-14.pdf>

5.3.2

TITLE

Říkáme si společně / Pohádka o jazýčku / Paramisa pal e čhibori / Story about tongue.

DESCRIPTION

This material for children and parents was created in order to find entertaining way to improve pronunciation and face

and mouth muscles. It is relaxing and funny way parents and children can share Story about the tongue and train phonematic perception which will help children to prepare for reading and writing.

WEB LINK

- Czech and Romani version: <http://online.pubhtml5.com/yogo/yugh/#p=2>
- Additional material - cards with pictures: <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/karty-pohadka-o-jazycku.pdf>

5.3.3

TITLE

Říkáme si společně / Učíme se hlásky / Sikhluvas o hlaski / Practicing vocals / We are talking together – English version.

DESCRIPTION

For material for parents, we have designed a set of simple worksheets with a number of easy exercises and activities for practicing phonematic perception. These can be easily implemented in daily life and can be introduced as a fun game and a past-time activity for children and their parents. In addition to that, we created short videos, which will help parents to practice and to gain more arguments, why it is important to place children in preschools.

Videos are available under www.varianty.cz/khetaun.

The material was prepared for pronunciation in Czech language, therefore the english version differs and is more linked to Story about the Tongue.

WEB LINK

- Czech and Romani version: <http://online.pubhtml5.com/yogo/qzxa/>
- English version: <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/pdfresizer.com-pdf-resize.pdf>
- Additional material - cards with pictures: http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/3160_karty-cvicime-hlasky.pdf

5.3.4

TITLE

Recommendations for policy makers at the level of individual country of partner organization in the field of inclusion of Romani children into preschool programs Czech Republic.

DESCRIPTION

The Recommendations are aimed at municipalities as the founders of kindergartens and relevant policy decision makers in the field of education.

WEB LINK

- in English language: <http://online.pubhtml5.com/yogo/tdlm/>
- in Czech language: <http://online.pubhtml5.com/yogo/hznp/>

5.3.5 TITLE

Videos for empowering Romani parents from socially disadvantaged areas in child care and development.

DESCRIPTION

In order to reach more families and provide useful tips for activities with children, we created 16 short videos in Czech and Romani language about:

- Importance of preschool education (3 videos) What can be difficult in preschool attendance (1 video)
- Games for practicing colors (1 video)
- Reading with children (1 video)
- Story about the Tongue (2 videos - Czech and Romani language)
- Activities to distinguish vocals - different sets with 4 difficult vocals – (8 videos in Czech and Romani language) with comments from logopedist.

WEB LINK

- Videos in Czech and Romani Language with Czech Subtitles: <https://www.varianty.cz/projekty/64-khetaun-spolecne-klicove-kroky-pro-zapojeni-romskych-socialne-zevyhodnenych-deti-do-kvalitnich-predskolnich-programu> - *page will be switched into www.varianty.cz/khetaun.*

5.4 Slovakia

5.4.1 TITLE

Jazierko - Paňori.

DESCRIPTION

Picture book prepared by Romani parents and their children at an early age, with the assistance of ECEC professionals. This book is used as an educational material for workshops targeting on the improvement of parental skills of Romani parents, as well as on social and emotional development of Romani children at an early age.

WEB LINK

<http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/JAZIERKO-PANORI.pdf>

5.4.2 TITLE

Parenting with Confidence / Rodičovstvo s dôverou.

DESCRIPTION

Educational material for professionals and para-professionals working with Romani communities, for Romani parents, grandparents and children at an early age. The material is used for trainings, workshops and home visits. Content of the manual consists from various topics connected with education for social justice, building the confidence of Romani parents and preparation of Romani children for primary education.

WEB LINK

- http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/Trust-Based-Parenting_EN.pdf (ENG)
- <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/Rodicovstvo-zalozene-na-dovere.pdf> (SK)

5.4.3**TITLE****Health and child / Zdravie a dieťa.****DESCRIPTION**

Educational material for professionals and para-professionals working with Romani communities, for Romani parents, grandparents and children at an early age. This material is used for trainings, workshops and home visits. Content of the manual consists from health topics and advisory in the area of health, vaccination, regular checkings calendar, etc.

WEB LINK

- <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/Health-and-child.pdf> (ENG)
- <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/Zdravie-a-dieta.pdf> (SK)

5.4.4**TITLE****Recommendations for policy makers / Odporúčania pre tvorcov politik.****DESCRIPTION**

The Recommendations are aimed at municipalities as the founders of kindergartens and relevant policy decision makers in the field of education.

WEB LINK

- <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/12/Recommendations-for-policy-makers-updated-SLOVAKIA.pdf> (ENG)
- <http://khetaun.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/12/Recommendations-for-policy-makersSK.pdf> (SK)

6

PROJECT IN NUMBERS

Petra Zgonec, Educational Research Institute

Description / Countries:	Latvia	Slovenia	Czech Republic	Slovakia	All together
Number of developed international modules	1	1	1	1	4
Number of developed national modules	4	4	4	4	16
Number of carried out international trainings	1	1	1	1	4
Number of all training participants at international level	10	12	11	11	44
Number of carried out national trainings	4	4	4	4	16
Number of all training participants at the national level	23	32	32	22	109

Description / Countries:	Latvia	Slovenia	Czech Republic	Slovakia	All together
Number of activities carried out for Romani children and their parents	10	12	11	10	43
Number of activity providers	13	12	9	2	36
Number of all children involved (count each child only once)	70	239	51	15	375
Number of all Romani children involved (count each child only once)	20	19	26	15	80
Number of all parents involved (count each individual only once)	26	242	30	10	308
Number of all Romani parents involved (count each individual only once)	10	22	28	10	70
Number of monitorings carried out	10	10	11	10	41
Number of multiplier events carried out	2	2	2	2	8
Number of participants at multiplier events	31	62	23	34	150
Number of issued publications (without translation)	4	5	5	4	18/19 including final publication

7

EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PROJECT

Alenka Gril, Educational Research Institute

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The evaluation of the project activities is based on *four sources* in all partners' organization in four participating countries: Slovenia, Latvia, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

- 1. *The evaluation of the trainings;*** the summaries of participants' subjective evaluations of four international trainings, and four national trainings conducted in each country. Each of the training was assessed according to five criteria (content, activities, materials, organization, and atmosphere), estimated on four-point scale (1-bad, 2-satisfactory, 3-well, 4-very good) and two open-ended questions on their subjective reflection. There were 10 to 12 participants from all four countries at the international trainings, and 20 to 30 participants at the national trainings (e.g. educators, preschool principals, NGO's workers, psycho-pedagogical professionals, and Romani teacher assistants).
- 2. *The observations of the activities;*** the summaries of the observations of each of the implemented activities in four countries, which were written by the educators in the activity evaluation form. The evaluation focused on the written observation of what was learned at the activities, what were the reactions of Romani children and parents, and what was the satisfaction of all of the participants at the activities.

- 3. *The questionnaire for educators and preschool leaders;*** it measured the perceived effects of the project activities (Romani children and parents' trust to ECEC institution and educators, and the satisfaction of participants were measured on five-point scale; perceived outcomes on different levels of the individual participants, the kindergarten, the local community were measured in open-ended question), and the professional development during the project (the competencies for inclusive practices of the educators and the kindergarten, and the professional support of the leaders and the colleagues were measured on five-point scale, with added open-ended clarifying question for the later). Not all of the participating educators and the preschool leaders (head masters, deputies, pedagogical leaders, psycho-social consultants) from the participating kindergartens in four countries fulfilled the questionnaire at the end of the project. The evaluation based on the answers of sixteen educators (six in Slovenia, three in Latvia, two in Czech Republic, and five in Slovakia), and ten preschool leaders (five in Slovenia, one in Latvia, two in Czech Republic, two in Slovakia). They were all women, with more than four years (and up to 33 years) of working experiences in preschool programs. The majority of educators and leaders had also previous experiences in working with Romani children and their families in the preschool, but there were also some without these experiences.
- 4. *The interviews with Romani parents;*** the interviews were conducted in the focus groups or individually at the end of the project. The questions focused on their trust in the ECEC institution and the educators, their satisfaction with the activities, the usefulness of the activities for them and their children, and their willingness to continue the cooperation with the kindergarten. Altogether 28 parents were interviewed (six in Slovenia – four mothers, one father; eight in Latvia - six mothers, two grandmothers, two fathers; six in Czech Republic - six mothers; eight in Slovakia - six mothers, two fathers).

The process quality of the project activities

The process quality of the activities has been evaluated according to the *qualitative indicators* set in the preparation phase of the project: the professional competencies and support of the educators within inclusive preschool programmes, the importance of preschool education for Romani children and parents, the trust built in relations between Roma and non-Roma participants, the satisfaction of all of the participants, the awareness of the importance of preschool education for Romani children, and the readiness for continuing inclusive practices.

THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES FOR INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL PRACTICE

The teacher trainings

Four international trainings were conducted by the leading partner organization from Slovenia (Educational Research Institute – ERI): 1) “The importance of preschool education and ensuring social justice in education,” held in Latvia; 2) “Building trust and connecting the preschool with different actors within the local community,” held in Slovakia; 3) “Activities for children who are not enrolled in preschool and their parents,” held in Slovenia; 4) “Programmes for empowering Romani families in regard to child-care and stimulating child development,” held in Czech Republic.

Each of the training was assessed according to five criteria (content, activities, materials, organization, and atmosphere) and two open ended questions on their subjective reflection. In average, the participants estimated *the content of trainings, the activities, the organization and the atmosphere as very good, and used material as good*. On the question “what have they learned at the training” the answers revealed they’ve got *new ideas* and suggestions and *new information about Romani community and how to work with them* (e.g. the strategies for developing Romani parents’ competencies for health care and child raising, how to build trust between Romani parents and ECEC settings, the recognition of home

environment and less developed vocabulary in Romani families, the information on the social status of Romani community, the cooperation between various stakeholders in the Municipality). They also added “free commentaries” in which a lot of attendees *praised the trainings, especially professional approach, informative, experienced and friendly lecturers, friendly atmosphere* where they could *exchange their own experiences*. They were satisfied with the trainings, and also recognized their value, e.g. as personally meaningful and useful.

Four national trainings on the same topics as international ones were conducted in all four participating countries. The participants in Latvia and Slovakia in average estimated all four trainings as very good on all four criteria. Also in Slovenia, three trainings were assessed as very good, and one training - “Building trust and connecting preschool with different actors within local community” as well. In Czech Republic the trainings were assessed in a bit less favourable manner. *The content, the activities, and the organization were assessed as well in average, the material used as fair, while the atmosphere was assessed as very good* as in all of the other countries.

Their answers to an open ended question revealed they’ve learned about *the life of Romani families* and their social situation, and *how to work with them* and *building their trust* to ECEC settings, and *how to teach them to support their child development*. They’ve also learned *methods and strategies for implementing the inclusive preschool practices* with Romani children and parents, as well as *how to prepare themselves* for building the inclusive learning environment, e.g. reduce prejudices, perceive the necessity of this work. They also recognized the need to cooperate within the local community. They’ve become *motivated* for working with Romani children and creating supportive learning environment. In free commentaries they expressed *appreciation of the trainings, and the lecturers* (their enthusiasm and friendliness), as well as *the recognition of their own switch in the perspective* and understanding of Romani families.

These evaluations show that the trainings equipped the educators (and others in this role) with necessary knowledge, strategies and methods for inclusive preschool practices with Romani children and their families. And also the awareness of the importance of inclusive preschool education was raised among them. It was shown as a new perspective gained on the preschool education and Romani community, and as more open attitude developed towards Romani children and families.

Questionnaires

The competencies for the inclusion of Romani children and parents into preschool programs, for empowering the Romani parents, for collaborating within local communities – were estimated by the questionnaire on the level of the kindergarten and the educators.

- *The educators' competences*

All of the educators in Slovakia and Czech Republic, and almost all in Slovenia estimated that *they have raised a lot of awareness in the Romani parents regarding the importance of including their children in preschool programs.* The educators in Latvia have raised less awareness in average.

The educators in all four countries in average estimated that *they quite mastered the appropriate skills and strategies for implementing activities for Romani children and parents* aimed to their inclusion into preschool programs. Some of the educators in Slovenia and Slovakia estimated that they mastered the inclusive skills a lot. And some of them in Czech Republic and Slovakia estimated that they mastered them moderately.

In all four countries the educators estimated that *they moderately cooperated with the local organizations* during the project. The average level of cooperation was the highest in Slovakia, quite, whereas in Latvia, Slovenia, and Czech Republic was lower, moderate.

- *The kindergarten's competences*

In all four countries the preschool leaders in average assessed that

the kindergarten have quite (to very) increased the awareness of Romani parents about the importance of including their children in preschool programs. It has been raised more in Slovakia and Slovenia, then in Latvia and Czech Republic.

The preschool leaders in all four countries in average assessed that *the kindergarten have moderately (to quite) mastered the appropriate skills and strategies for implementing the activities for Romani children and parents aimed to their inclusion into preschool. The appropriate skills and strategies of inclusion have quite mastered in Slovenia and Latvia, and moderately in Slovakia, but only very little in Czech Republic.*

In all four countries the preschool leaders in average assessed that *the kindergarten have quite intensified the cooperation with various organizations in the local communities aimed to better integrate Romani children and parents in preschool programs. The cooperation in the local communities has been increased a lot in Slovakia, quite in Latvia, and moderately in Slovenia and Czech Republic.*

It could be summarized that the competences of the educators and the ECEC institution for inclusive preschool practices with Romani families have been quite mastered in all four countries. Especially the educators (more than the kindergartens) perceived themselves as very competent for implementing the activities aimed for the inclusion of Roma families into preschool education.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION FOR ROMANI CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Questionnaires

The preschool leaders in Slovakia, Czech Republic and Slovenia perceived the inclusion of Romani children and parents into preschool programs as very important in average, while it was quite important for a head master in Latvia. In all four countries, the

preschool leaders agreed about its importance for *facilitating the transition into the primary school* and better success of Romani children in the future. In Slovenia they exposed its *socialization* effects – the early childhood education provides the equal opportunities for the optimal child development, language learning, and stimulates positive cultural awareness of Romani children. The leaders in Czech Republic see the importance in *convincing the Romani parents that the education matter* and they need to bring their children into (pre)school. In Slovakia the preschool leaders see the importance of such a program also in the *adaptability of learning environment* (materials and teaching approaches) to the specific needs of the child which is only possible when they've known the child's family background.

For *the educators* in three countries the inclusion of Romani children and their parents in preschool programs is *very important* in average, while in Latvia they perceived it as quite important. The educators in all four countries agreed that it is beneficiary for the *school transition*, and further education of Romani children. In Slovenia and Czech Republic the educators see the importance of the early education of Romani children in the scope of *socialization*. The inclusion of preschool programs provides them the flexible environment for learning and play, better nutrition, and interactions with other children and adults. Therefore it stimulates their social network and spreading the opportunities for *improving the social status of Roma* in the society – what was perceived in Slovenia, Latvia, and Slovakia. The social integration of Romani children also means *better future for all of us* – stated the Slovene educators. This was mentioned more specifically by the educators in the other three countries, as the possibility for *overcoming prejudices* towards Roma in the majority population, and creating a *dialog* with Romani families which allowed for better *understanding* and acceptance of Roma culture, as well as *creating the ways of living together* with Roma people. In Czech Republic, the educators stated that it was *important for Romani parents* also, for *getting used to communicate with an educational institution* and overcoming the barriers, as well as positively influencing their attitudes towards education.

It could be concluded that for the preschool professionals, participants in the project, the inclusion of Roma families into preschool education is very important. They listed various positive justifications, from socialization effects and stimulating child development through social interactions to facilitating school transition; and from getting to know each other and overcome prejudices and stereotypes to adjust the learning environment to the child's cultural/family background, and also to provide the bridge for Romani parents' social integration and better living for all in the future.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT IN IMPLEMENTING THE INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMES FOR ROMANI FAMILIES

Questionnaires

Almost all of the preschool leaders in all four countries assessed they provided a lot of professional support to the educators at managing and implementing activities for Romani children and their parents when they needed it. In Slovenia, Czech Republic and Slovakia, the preschool leaders supported the educators by counselling, permanent communication and dialog, joint problem-solving, collaboration and assistance in the activities. They provided material support (e.g. books, resources, materials, premises). In Slovenia and Slovakia, they also supported the education and training, and assisted in organizing the contacts. In Latvia, the leader provided financial support to educators.

In average, the educators in all four countries assessed that the provided professional support has contributed quite a lot to their competences to carry out the project activities. In Slovakia, they reported about the most helpful support.

In all four countries the educators received the support from the kindergarten leadership almost always in average. In Slovakia, all of the educators always received the support from the leaders, while in Slovenia, perceived support from the leaders varied among individual educators. In Latvia, Czech Republic and

Slovakia, the educators received the support from the leaders in *organizing the activities*, and events. In three countries, except Latvia, they reported about the leaders' support in *providing education and training*. In Slovenia and Czech Republic they reported about the *consultations*, advices, and exchange of good practices. In Latvia the leaders *provided the materials* for the activities, in Slovakia *special space for activities*. In Czech Republic, the educators received *methodological support* from the leaders when uncertainties appeared. In Latvia, the educators perceived the leader's support in *their acknowledgment*.

In all four countries *the educators almost always received the support from their colleagues*, in average. In Slovakia and Latvia, all of the educators always received the support from colleagues, while in Slovenia perceived support varied the most among individual educators. In Slovenia and Latvia, the support from the colleagues was received through *consultations*, *advices*, and *assistance* in organizing and realizing the activities. The later was gained in Czech Republic also, together with joint *planning* and *evaluation* of activities. In Slovenia and Slovakia, the colleagues *shared the materials and ideas* (e.g. didactic materials, training materials, special materials for Romani parents, picture books). In Slovenia they reported about the expression of *empathy and understanding* in the colleagues.

It could be concluded that the support given to the educators who implementing the project activities has been substantial for its success and quite regular. They received the support from the leaders and the colleagues mainly in the form of consultation and sharing of the experience, but also as the assistance at work and material support. The leaders were important also for their provision of organizational and administrative support, and stimulating the education and training.

THE TRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ROMANI PARENTS AND THE EDUCATORS

Observations

In Slovenia, Latvia, and Czech Republic the Romani parents showed *more trust to the educators and the ECEC institution*, and had *more interests and positive attitude* towards them. They've got to *know what the kindergarten could offer* to them, and that the employees had good intentions with their children. They've learned to value *mutual collaboration* between kindergarten and parents.

In Slovenia and Latvia the Romani parents *socialized and connected with other parents* too. So, they realized they were accepted by the other participants of the workshops, and that they could communicate with other parents and adults outside their community. Therefore they became *more self-confident and interested in the activities*, and they *participated more actively*. In Slovenia and Czech Republic the Romani parents also realized *how important is the inclusion of their children in the kindergarten*, also for their future education. In Slovakia, the Romani parents have *learned the importance of playing and communicating with children*.

Questionnaires

The leaders in all four countries perceived *more trust to the kindergartens in more than a half of the Romani parents* due to the project activities in average. In Slovakia and Slovenia they reported about more trust developed in the Romani parents than in Latvia and Czech Republic.

The educators in all four countries in average perceived that *the majority of Romani parents trust them more*, due to the project activities. In Slovakia and Latvia they reported about more trustful Romani parents than in Slovenia and Czech Republic. In Slovenia, the perceived trust developed in the Romani parents varied the most among the educators.

Interviews

Almost all of the interviewed Romani parents in all four countries confirmed that the level of their trust in the ECEC professionals and the preschool institution strengthened during the activities. In all four countries they explained their trust by the expressed *kindness of the educators* towards children and parents. They also said that *the cooperation* with the preschool club strengthened, because they were invited many times by the educators, and socialized more. In Slovenia, Latvia and Czech Republic they justified their trust on the basis of their appreciation of *detailed explanations of the educators whom they could pose any question*, so they could accept their recommendations. In Slovenia, Latvia and Slovakia they mentioned that the trust developed by *getting to know each other* (before they didn't). In Slovenia and Latvia they also said they trust more because they would know *how their child feels* in the preschool, that she likes to be with other children and shows interests in preschool activities. In Latvia and Slovakia they exposed *they've got to know more about preschool* to be trusted, about the environment and daily routine there.

In Latvia, one parent who said that had not build more trust in ECEC explained that she likes to have children at home, and she believes the family is the best place for a child, and the time spent with parents is the most important. In Czech Republic, one parent who had not build trust to the preschool said that it was because her child failed to adapt to the preschool in first weeks.

In could be concluded that the project facilitate the increase in trust in the great majority of Romani parents to the preschool teachers, work and the institution in all four countries. The trust was built on the bases of mutual acquaintance developed in frequent cooperation, positive and open communication of the educators and their appreciation of Romani parents and children during common activities, as well as their willingness to answer any questions of the Romani parents.

THE TRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ROMANI CHILDREN AND THE OTHER CHILDREN

Observations

In Slovenia and Latvia, Romani children have learned that *everybody could be active, accepted, relaxed and satisfied when collaborated mutually*. So, they've learned cooperative skills – how to work, learn, play, enjoy together. In Slovenia and Czech Republic they've learned the *daily schedule* at the preschool and known *how the activities are conducting* in the kindergarten. They *socialized* and made contacts and *friendships with other children* (also non-Romani children, in Slovenia).

In Slovenia, Romani children have learned that *their effort and work could be of value*. In Latvia, they've learned to *accept the differences*. They *supported each other* and helped if necessary. In Slovakia, they have learned the *communication skills* and play.

Questionnaires

In Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Latvia the educators estimated that *the majority to almost all of the Romani children have made contact with their non-Roma peers*. On the other hand, none of the Romani child in Slovakia had made contact with other, non-Romani children because they performed the activities with Romani children only.

It could be concluded, that more than a half of participating Romani children have been in contacts with non-Romani children in three countries (except Slovakia), and they built the trust in other children and adults, within common activities which they enjoy, and could learn communicative and cooperative skills.

SATISFACTION OF ROMANI CHILDREN WITH THE PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Observations

In all four countries Romani children liked and enjoy the activities. Their satisfaction and happiness was noticed mostly by their *smiley faces*, in all four countries. They were also laughing, clapping with their hands, had eyes wide open, etc. They were more interested in and *more active*.

In Slovenia and Czech Republic, the educators noticed that the Romani children expressed *confidence* and *proud* (e.g. they were proud on their products and liked to show them to the parents and educators, or when they succeeded in facing various challenges).

Their pleasure with the activities were shown in Slovenia also at the end of the workshops when they were disappointed that they were ending, and *wanted to stay some more time*, and asked if they could come again. In Latvia, Romani children were sometimes invited to *evaluate the activity* at the end by sticking the stickers to a smiley, neutral or sad. They glued stickers to the smiley face, because they enjoyed the activities.

Questionnaires

In all four countries the educators in average estimated that almost all of the Romani children have expressed pleasure with the project activities. In Slovenia and Slovakia all of the educators noticed pleasure in all of the Romani children involved in the activities. In Latvia and Czech Republic the educator assessed the pleasure in the majority of Romani children.

It could be concluded that almost all of the Romani children who participated in the activities experienced pleasure, joy, happiness and satisfaction.

SATISFACTION OF ROMANI PARENTS WITH THE PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Observations

In all four countries, the Romani parents felt *supported* and *empowered* at the activities.

They appreciated project workers being interested in their situation and paying attention. They were satisfied with the way the information was transmitted – user friendly. They were very pleased when they realized they have the opportunity for playing with their children in these activities and they said they should do it more often. They thanked to the educators afterwards for interesting ideas that they could repeat at home.

In Slovenia and Slovakia, the educators reported the *happiness* of Romani parents. They observed the pleasure on their faces, smiles and nods during the activities or even excitement. In Slovenia and Latvia, the Romani parents were *pleased to see what their children have learned* during the activities or while playing with other children. Some of them felt proud of their child who performed successfully (e.g. in the art activities). In Latvia and Czech Republic, they've been also *interested in learning about their own, Roma culture* - language, flag, anthem, costumes, etc. They've been surprised to see written Romani language in the materials for children and parents.

In Czech Republic, the Romani parents were also *willing to share the information about their children* with the educators. In Slovakia, the educators reported about the *commitment* of Romani parents. In Slovenia some of them also expressed the *interest for the enrolment of their children into preschool* after the workshops.

Questionnaires

The educators in all four countries agreed that *the majority to almost all of the Romani parents were satisfied* with the project activities.

It could be concluded that the majority of Romani parents were satisfied with the activities, and sometimes positively surprised what they could have learned, together with their children, in the preschool, where the educators were interested in them and helpful.

SATISFACTION OF THE EDUCATORS WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Observations

In all four countries all of the workshops were implemented according to the plan of activities. In Slovenia, *all of the participants were satisfied* with the implementations (the kindergarten, NGO, ERI). In Latvia, they were proud of the *professional and interested teachers, of supportive parents and active and curious children*, and the enjoyment which these activities created for all of the participants. In Czech Republic, they made intensive *contacts and built trust with parents*. They are especially proud of the videos that have been created without previous planning, which had an empowering impact on parents. In Slovakia, they are particularly proud of the project realization, realized definition of needs, and better *mutual tolerance between Romani parents and non-Roma staff* of the preschool.

Questionnaires

In average, the educators in all four countries were quite satisfied with the project activities. The most satisfied with the project activities were educators in Slovakia, whereas in Slovenia their satisfaction varied the most – from moderately to very satisfy.

It could be concluded, that also the educators were quite satisfied with the activities, especially because they were well prepared and responsive to the needs of the Roma families, but also flexible and allowed for smooth interactions between the educators and Romani parents and children.

THE INTEREST IN CONTINUING THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMES FOR ROMANI FAMILIES

Questionnaires

The preschool leaders in three countries – Slovenia, Czech Republic and Slovakia, said that *they will certainly continue* to provide activities for Romani children and their parents in the kindergarten. In Latvia they are not sure yet whether they'll continue to carry them out or not.

In Slovakia and Czech Republic all of the educators are willing to continue with similar activities for Romani children and parents after the end of the project, and in Slovenia almost all, and one in Latvia. One educator in Slovenia and two in Latvia weren't sure yet whether they would continue or not.

Interviews

In all four countries, all of the interviewed Romani parents are willing to participate in this kind of activities and workshops also in the future. In Slovenia, they would like to go to the Zoo again or go to the trip to the seaside or have cookery workshops. In Latvia, they would like to have workshops, similar activities, different activities outside of the preschool or the activities where all the family can participate (also older children). In Slovakia, they would like to have activities for fathers and their role in child's life or the cooking for children or creating the picture books or outdoor activities.

It could be concluded that the activities developed in the project would certainly be continued, at least in the near future.

The project outcomes

The outcomes of the project were evaluated on different levels: Romani children and the other children, Romani parents and the other parents, the educators, the kindergartens, connecting the kindergarten with other organizations, and the local community. They were assessed at the end of the project by the open-ended questions for the leaders and the educators in the questionnaires. The perceived outcomes of the project for Romani children and their parents have been also collected by the educator's observations (about what has been learned in the activities) and by the interviews with Romani parents.

OUTCOMES FOR THE ROMANI CHILDREN

Questionnaires

The preschool leaders in Slovenia, Latvia and Slovakia perceived the effects of Khetaun project on the Romani children in a progress in their *personal development* (cognitive, emotional, social, motor development), language learning, acquiring new knowledge and skills. In Slovenia and Czech Republic the leaders mentioned that the project effected Romani children's *adaptation to the preschool environment*; they built trust and enjoyment in the kindergarten activities, collaborated with other, non-Romani children, so they have also develop the acceptance of otherness and other culture. In Czech Republic the leaders mentioned that the Romani children also profited by the project in the illustrative materials. In Slovakia, the leaders perceived the effects of the project in the *enrolment of new Romani children* in the kindergarten.

The educators in Slovenia, Latvia and Czech Republic perceived the effect of the project on Romani children in their *adaptation to the kindergarten environment*; they felt good and safe, enjoyed in new activities, had interests in socializing and participating in the activities, interacted more easily, and accepted the kindergarten better. In Czech Republic and Slovakia the educators reported the

effect of the project on *learning new skills* (social and emotional skills, drawing and painting, interacting with the parents).

Observations

In all four countries children have learned *communication and cooperation skills*: how to collaborate with others and being satisfied, to socialize and making contacts with non-Romani children, making new friends, how to accept differences, support each other, help if necessary, building trust to children and adults.

In Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia they have learned *new skills*: *language* (pronunciation, phonetic consciousness, distinguish vocals, grammar skills,), *cognitive* (colour sensibility and colour recognition, time orientation, counting), *social* (rules and daily schedule at the preschool, play, hygienic skills, appropriate behaviour in the Puppet theatre), *motor* (fine motor skills, coordination eye-hand, sport), *emotional* (expressing oneself and the family, expressing emotions, how to self-manage fear from the doctor).

In Slovenia and Latvia, Romani children have learned how to *handle things* and create interesting, beautiful, useful things by their own hands. In Slovenia, the Romani children also learned how different animals live.

Interviews

In Slovenia, Latvia and Czech Republic the Romani parents reported on their child's benefits in terms of *socializing* with each other, making new friends, playing together, learning to help each other if necessary, and becoming more open and willing to communicate with others. In Latvia and Czech Republic they mentioned also their children's *positive emotions*, like having fun.

In all four countries the Romani parents noticed their children's learning of *new, useful things*, games and fairy tales, and acquiring *new skills* of creating things by their own hands. In Slovenia, they mentioned they were for the first time in the Zoo. And, they have got to know the educators. In Slovakia, Romani parents reported that their children are better *prepared for the school*.

OUTCOMES FOR THE OTHER CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN

Questionnaires

In three countries, except Slovakia, the preschool leaders perceived the effects of Khetaun project on the other children in developing their *tolerance* and *acceptance of otherness*. They developed *friendly attitude towards Romani children*, got to know other culture, habits, language, and interpersonal differences. They gained *positive experience* and enrichment of learning in diverse settings. In Czech Republic the leaders mentioned that the other children also benefited the illustrative materials.

Also the educators in three countries reported that the project has affected other children in their better *acceptance of otherness*, making no difference between the children, and developing *positive attitudes towards Romani children and their families*. They developed better interactions with peers, also with Romani children. In Latvia they said that the other children gained *positive experience* in the project. In Czech Republic also the other children learned and practiced their *motor skills and verbal skills* in diverse settings.

In Slovakia the leaders and the educators didn't perceived the project's effects on the other children, because there were no other children.

OUTCOMES FOR THE ROMANI PARENTS

Questionnaires

In Slovenia, Latvia, and Slovakia, the preschool leaders perceived the effects of Khetaun project on the Romani parents in developing *trust* in the kindergarten as an institution. In Slovenia and Czech Republic the leaders noticed that Romani parents developed *acquaintances* in the kindergarten as they saw work and the possibilities inside the preschool institution, and were more willing to *communicate* (also in Romani language due to materials

developed in the project) and *cooperate* with the kindergarten. In Latvia and Czech Republic the leaders mentioned the *reduction of negative feelings* in Roma parents (e.g. did not feel discriminated, the shyness disappeared). In Slovenia, Czech Republic and Slovakia the leaders thought the project stimulate Romani parents for the *enrolment* of their children in the kindergarten at younger age. In Slovenia, they also saw the project as the beginning of positive support for the inclusion of Roma into broader society.

In Slovenia, Latvia, and Czech Republic, the educators perceived the effects of the project on Romani parents in *getting to know* the kindergarten as the institution and the teachers. They gained the *insights into the work* and living in the kindergarten, and might *talk to the educators and the principal*, and realized the kindergarten has a positive attitude towards them. They *felt less fear* and *accepted* the kindergarten as safe and comfortable environment for children's learning. Therefor the *trust* developed.

In Latvia, the educators mentioned that Romani parents also became *more active*. In Slovakia, they reported the Romani parents have *involved in common activities with their children* during the project. They worked with picture books and used the training materials, and linguistically appropriate materials. In Czech Republic, they have also got the information about the obligatory year of preschool education. Therefor the project *stimulated the enrolment* of majority of their Romani children in the preschool.

Observations

In all four countries Romani parents *socialized*, communicated and played with their children. They have learned *how to teach and support their own children* in learning with simple activities at home, and how to spend time with children creatively.

In Slovenia, Latvia and Czech Republic, Romani parents have also got to *know the preschool institution*, what it could offer to them, and experienced positive attitudes of the educators and other parents towards them, and *felt accepted*. So, they built *trust* in the ECEC workers, and appreciated the collaboration with the

kindergarten. They became aware why it is important to include their children into preschool. In Latvia, there were exposed that the Romani parents became more self-confident and *more active in the local community* and within local educational institutions. They expanded their horizons, and came closer to others.

In Slovenia, some of the Romani parents saw their child performing for the first time. They've learned about the life of animals in the Zoo. They had the opportunity to ask medical staff about their health. In Slovakia, they've got health advises too, and the information about nutrition.

Interviews

In Slovenia and Latvia, the Romani parents perceived the project workshops as a nice opportunity to *go with the child outside the Roma community*. They've got to know the educators. They've got information about different places nearby (library, museum) where they could go with their children. And in Latvia, they got to know more about Latvian traditions.

In Latvia, Slovakia, and Czech Republic they said they *strengthened themselves as parents*, during the project. They have learned new activities to support child development. They learned to communicate and play with their children. In Latvia and Slovakia, they pointed to the possibility to meet other parents, speak with them, and share the experiences with them. In Latvia, they said it was interesting to saw their child playing with others.

In Slovenia, they said that they *felt good* at the workshops, and have got the medical information about them (e.g. blood sugar test). In Latvia and Czech Republic, they reported they *learned new things*, got new knowledge, and new information.

OUTCOMES FOR THE OTHER PARENTS

Questionnaires

In Slovenia and Latvia, the leaders perceived the *acceptance* in the other parents. They developed *understanding* of the other culture, and more mutual tolerance, also overcoming stereotypes. In Czech Republic also the other parents have got the information and materials of the project.

The educators in Slovenia, Latvia, and Czech Republic reported about developing *trust* among Roma and other parents. They had the opportunity to gain the insight into something different. The other parents *positively communicated* with and started to *accept* the Roma people, and formed positive attitude towards them. The project aimed to abandon the prejudice and breaking the taboos in the majority population.

In Czech Republic, the educators reported that also the other parents, not just Romani parents, have been inspired at the project activities to *practice language and motor skills* with their children at home.

In Slovakia, there were no other, non-Romani parents involved in the project.

OUTCOMES FOR THE EDUCATORS

Questionnaires

In Slovenia, Czech Republic and Slovakia the leaders reported that the educators gained better *acceptance* and *understanding* of Roma culture. And they are more *tolerant*, less prejudiced and stereotypical due to the project activities.

In Slovenia the leaders said that the educators are more *aware of the meaning of inclusion* of Romani children. They developed *practical skills* for doing the inclusive activities with Romani children and parents in the kindergarten and in the Roma community, and they also *raised the level of quality* of these activities. Only the minority

of the kindergarten teachers were involved in the project, but all of them were informed about it.

The Latvian leader reported about *new knowledge* developed in the educators during the project. The leaders in Czech Republic perceived the gain of the project for the educators in *supportive materials*.

In Slovenia, Latvia and Slovakia the educators reported they developed *acceptance* and *reluctance* to Roma community. They have got new or extended knowledge about the Roma culture and traditions.

In Slovenia, they noticed some *reduction of prejudice* in educators, and better *understanding of the inclusion* of Romani children in the preschool, depending on their involvement into the project. Therefor more awareness of these issues remains the challenge for the future.

The educator from Czech Republic reported that the project was an *inspiration* for her work with children and a *support* for her work with parents.

The educators in Slovakia perceived the gains in *social justice training*, the *cooperation* with all relevant stakeholders, and in the creation of *picture books*.

OUTCOMES FOR THE KINDERGARTENS

Questionnaires

The leaders in Slovenia noticed the effects of the project on the kindergarten in the *professional development*, *mutual learning*, *overcoming stereotypes*, *flexibility*, *acceptance of otherness*, raising the level of *quality* of the basic mission of preschool institution, e.g. education. The institution has also developed *openness into the local community*, and helps more the marginal groups in their socialization and inclusion in broader society. However, the preschool always has to adapt to the needs of parents and

children and seek the opportunities for better work conditions. In Latvia the leader reported that the kindergarten gained from the project *the changed attitudes towards Romani children* among the preschool staff. In Slovakia the leaders reported about the kindergarten's gains in the project as better *cooperation* between staff, more meetings with parents, and more Romani parents involved as teaching assistants. In Czech Republic the leader has not perceived any gains of the project activities at the level of the whole kindergarten.

The educators in Latvia reported that the project affected the kindergarten in raising interests of educators and children for *interacting with Romani children*, participating in the activities, *learn* more, and *developing* new contacts and themselves personally. In Czech Republic the educators perceived the gains of the project for the kindergarten in deepening *communication between preschool and the school*, in opening space for *meeting with the parents* and discuss child development. The educators in Slovakia perceived the gains of the project for the kindergarten in the Roma language, *cooperation* with Roma community, communication with municipality office, and study visits. The educators in Slovenia didn't notice any organizational changes, neither new employment.

OUTCOMES FOR CONNECTING THE KINDERGARTEN WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Questionnaires

In Slovenia the preschool leaders reported about the deepening cooperation with the institutions and organizations in the local community during the project (especially with Centre of social work and Health centre). In Latvia the leader reported about the development of good cooperation with Preili Secondary school No. 2 and Preili museum. In Czech Republic the leader reported about close cooperation with one organization, People in need. In Slovakia the leaders reported about the cooperation with municipality office, especially the mayor and social field-workers, and also the involvement of new NGO in solving various types of community problems.

The educators in Slovenia reported that the project stimulated first beginnings of cooperation between the kindergarten and local community. Especially, one person from NGO who were very engaged in contacting and stimulating parents and children in the Roma community represented the bridge between them and the kindergarten. She was in great help for the preschool teachers in presenting the Roma problems and special needs, as well as in organizing and implementing the project activities. The teachers also reported about newly developed collaborations with NGO, Health centre, and two elementary schools.

The educators in Latvia reported about positive, friendly, interesting and effective collaborations of the kindergarten with the local community. The Children Library and Museum were very supportive and willing to participate in the activities. The educators in Czech Republic reported about deepening cooperation of the preschool club with the preschool. The educators in Slovakia perceived new contacts with NGO working in the ECEC, the cooperation with the Ministry of education, and new contacts with Slovak and international partners. They mentioned study visits and international cooperation developed in the project.

OUTCOMES FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Questionnaires

In Slovenia the leaders reported about the collaboration of community institutions – health centre, elementary school, centre of social work, and organization – MOZAIK association. They also mentioned more open opportunities for mutual collaboration and connections, where each has to contribute to better inclusion and solving current and systemic problems. The project contributed to the beginning of acceptance of Roma culture.

In Latvia the leader reported on changed attitude at the local level. In Czech Republic the leader reported about a positive move between kindergarten and the local community on the basis of the project. In Slovakia the leaders reported on more trust and promotion of the importance of education developed in the community due to the project activities.

The educators in Slovenia mentioned the collaboration with Health centre and two elementary schools which developed during the project. The educator in Latvia reported about the changed attitude towards Roma in the community, which has become more favourable. The educator in Czech Republic reported about better awareness of the possibilities of preschool education in the community, as well as awareness of the obligatory year of preschool education. The educators in Slovakia reported about the trust of Romani parents in cooperation with the preschool, which were recognized as an important part of the community life. They also reported about the developed confidence in parenting during the project.

Conclusion

The project fulfilled all the activities planned with high quality and reach all the objectives set: it rose the awareness of the Romani parents about the importance of preschool education, it also strengthened their parental competences, it developed educators' competences (and institutional competencies as well) – for implementing inclusive preschool activities for Romani children and their parents, for connecting the kindergarten within local community. During the project activities also the trust was built in Romani parents to the ECEC educators and the institutions what also strengthened their cooperation with the local institutions outside the Romani communities, in all four participating countries. The activities stimulated the cognitive and social development of the Romani children and facilitated their transitions to primary school. Also, the project broke some stereotypes among educators and other, non-Roma parents, and rose the mutual interests (in the Romani parents also) for further joint activities which could lead to more inclusive society. And there are many more positive outcomes of the project for all of the participants. However, the preschool activities aimed to the inclusion of Romani children and their parents into ECEC programmes will certainly be continued, at least in all four participating local communities.

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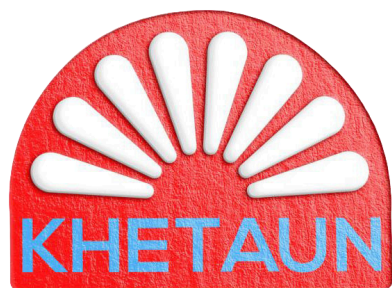
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